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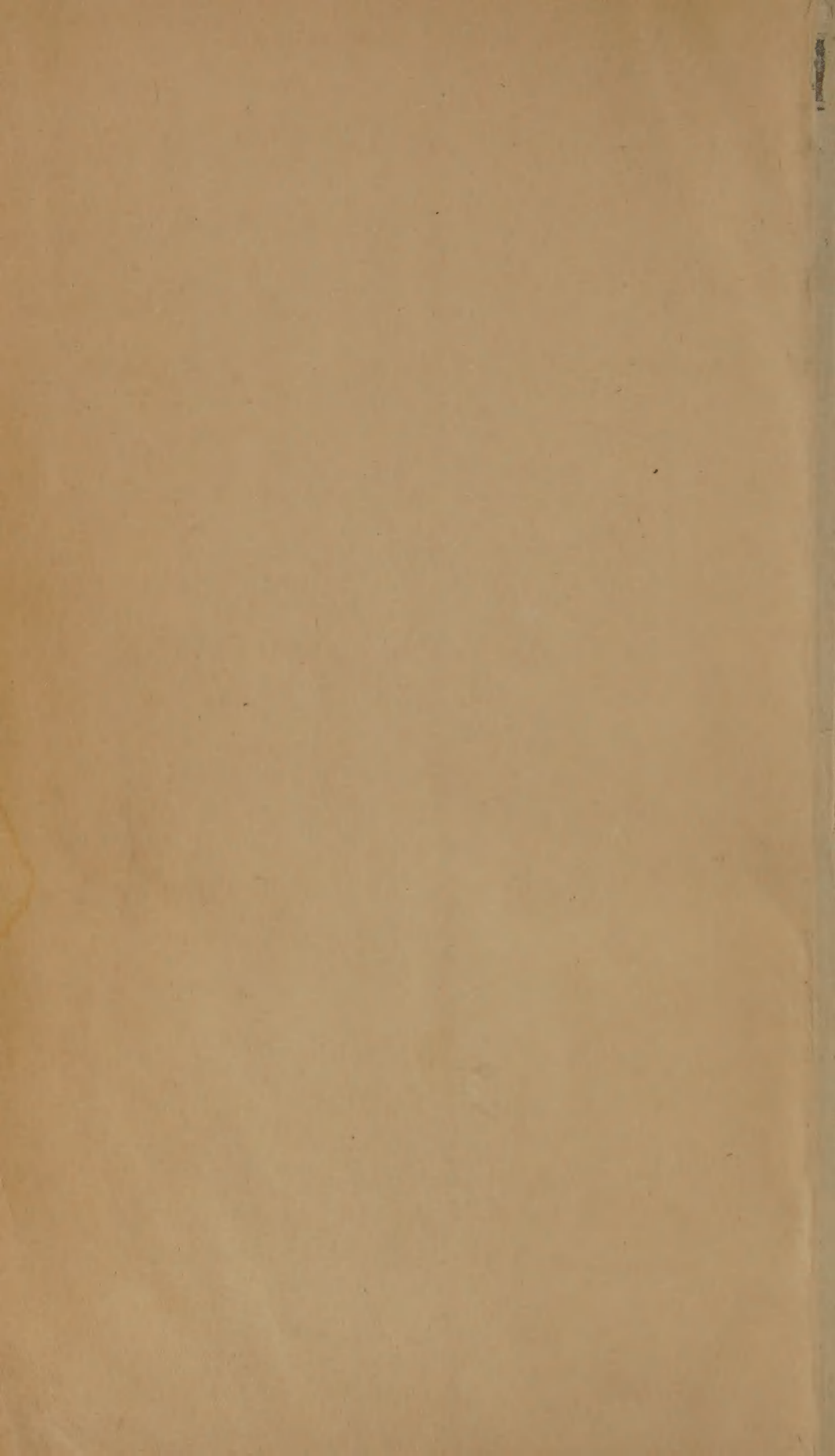
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QUEEN ALEXANDRA

A Study of Royalty By W. R. H.

TROWBRIDGE

With an

Introduction by Walburga, Lady Paget

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NEW YORK

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

1921

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

INTRODUCTION

BY

WALBURGA, LADY PAGET

THIS book is a presentment of an era of national prosperity, comfort, and light-hearted happiness for which it is difficult to find a comparison in any other country or time.

Perfect and proud confidence was written across the bond which united the peoples of the greatest Empire the world had ever seen.

In the centre of this brilliant picture Queen Alexandra scintillates like a pure jewel—lovely to the eyes, but far dearer to the hearts, of a nation which had at once adopted her as its fairy Princess.

This charm has not waned; it has been kept alive by the Queen's kindness of heart, her unselfishness, simplicity, and unswerving truthfulness, which have swept away all that is mean or base from her environment.

The Queen has, in her long experience of life and events, acquired a great knowledge of the world, which, with her inborn common sense and tact, gives her judgments and acts exceptional weight. In her early days, how-

ever, her influence was felt in a different way. The first perceptible symptom was the "cachet" she imprinted on fashion. This became very marked after the fall of the Second French Empire, for Republics do not breed fashions, and from times immemorial the impetus and tone have always been given by Courts. The trend of these fashions emanated from the Princess's characteristics, which were extreme neatness and great simplicity, united to grace and dignity. There never was anything extreme in design, shape, or colour. This influence lasted about two-score years, to be submerged at last by the flood of luxury and extravagance ending in vulgar ugliness, a development which students of history know well as the symptoms of revolutionary unrest and the consequence of wars.

Through all the terrible years of the great struggle Queen Alexandra remained faithfully and courageously in London, helping and consoling, and, above all, giving the tonic of her presence to the nervous or depressed crowd which daily waited at the gates of Marlborough House to catch a glimpse of her. Her physical courage was sustained by her steadfast soul.

Gentle and uncomplaining she went about always, in the same simple little black dress,

doing her errands of mercy whilst the London streets were blazing with jewellery and furs, and the sounds of revelry at night were mingled with the booming of the Zeppelin bombs.

Once only the Queen murmured, and that was when she was told she must give up her beloved horses and dogs. Only the very smallest minimum was left to her, as her much straitened income was not sufficient to keep so many pets. It was a bitter sacrifice, for Queens are often lonely, and dogs are their sincerest friends.

May God protect this noble lady, and spare her latter years the great shocks and sorrows which have at times clouded her life. She has set, in her unselfish self-sacrifice and restraint, her compassion and her observance of the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer, an example to all women; and it would be an earnest for England's happiness if a rising generation would follow these footprints left in the sands of time by one who always held, and still holds, the love and devotion of the nation.

Valerie Bagot

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book is not a biography in the strict sense, nor does it belong to any stereotyped category. Though a Queen, august, beautiful, and good, is the central figure, the background which throws into high relief her gracious personality, as if designed for this express purpose, is scarcely less important. This background is the epoch that has passed, leaving, like a brilliantly setting sun, a long, gorgeous trail behind it.

The historian who will pronounce the final verdict on this great age in English history has yet to come, or, if already born, is still in swaddling clothes. For the Present is always quite incapable of judging the immediate Past dispassionately.

Youthful centuries are proverbially lacking in reverence. This want of respect for tradition is called the "modern spirit," though why it would be hard to say, seeing that the disparagement of the past is a very old habit of a young generation. The first years of the eighteenth century were spent in pulling to pieces the traditions of the seventeenth, and in similar fashion the early nineteenth flouted its parent, of which Talleyrand, though one of its principal detractors, said that only those who had lived before the French Revolution knew how beautiful and graceful life had been then.

The twentieth century has followed the example of its predecessors. Even before the close of the nineteenth it was the fashion to utter cheap jibes and shallow witticisms at the expense of the tottering colossus. The giants of the Victorian era were belittled; the ideals and customs of the age were discredited; certain decades, associated with a mode of life repugnant to others more congenial, were held up to ridicule . . . it was thus that the term "Early Victorian" became one of reproach.

No doubt this disparagement was inspired by no mere wanton spirit of iconoclasm, but by the natural indignation always felt by a young generation for the dead hand of convention which has been imposed by an older that has vanished. None who believe in the continuity of history, and that the past contains the future, will deny that the ideals of one age are not only often opposed but give the lie direct to those of another. Many vilify the past in order to make the present seem more tolerable than it is. They exaggerate past evils in the hope of finding present enjoyment in the happiness they long for. Man, as Michelet said, is his own Prometheus. But this singular mania for slandering ourselves, for parading old grievances, must sooner or later prove fatal. If we despise our achievements, others too will readily believe they are contemptible. The prestige of no people can endure such a test with impunity. The Italians of the Renaissance still possessed their freedom, but when Machiavelli exposed their weakness they lost it. History is full of such examples. The Fifth Commandment,

like all divine laws, is based on a fundamental fact of life.

The experience by which the realisation of this profound truth is acquired is the revenge of Time. Human achievements always seem greater and grander as their performance becomes more and more difficult, their incentive less and less possible. The further the past recedes the more wonderful it becomes. Succeeding ages look back upon it with envy or regret. Romance envelops and poetry ennobles it. Often a once glorious past is all that is left to a race. Sometimes, too, it has happened that the sentiment inspired by its hallowed memory contains the elixir of rejuvenescence. Reverence is the fruit of the tree of experience.

For us in England, more than elsewhere, the age that has passed has a message which, if we are wise, we will take to heart. There are sermons in epochs as there are in stones. The text of the nineteenth century's is Conciliation. It is the abracadabra of happiness. Whatever the judgment of the future may be on the past, it may, at least, be predicted with certainty that it will not be one of belittlement. As Time unfolds the romance of the age of Victoria and Edward VII the part played by royalty in the stately drama will be found to be one of the most edifying, and that of Queen Alexandra, in particular, one of the most sympathetic and lovable.

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QUEEN ALEXANDRA

CHAPTER I

ROYALTY

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ROYALTY—ITS ORIGIN—THE FIRST KINGS—BELIEF IN THEIR DIVINITY—TRACES OF THE SUPERSTITION IN MODERN TIMES—HOW ROYALTY TURNED IT TO ACCOUNT—ROYALTY AND CHRISTIANITY—POPULAR CONCEPTION OF KINGSHIP IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY—THE ORIGIN OF DEMOCRACY—EARLY ATTEMPTS TO LIMIT ROYAL AUTHORITY—THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE RIGHT—HOW DEMOCRACY INTERPRETED IT—THE DEIFICATION OF DEMOCRACY BY THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. II. EUROPEAN ROYALTY BEFORE THE FRENCH REVOLUTION—THE COURTS OF THE OLD REGIME—THE TYRANNY OF ETIQUETTE—ITS SINISTER INFLUENCE ON ROYALTY—"L'ÉTAT, C'EST MOI"—CALLOUS INDIFFERENCE OF ROYALTY TO THE PEOPLE—ITS RETRIBUTION—WAS ROYALTY ALTOGETHER TO BLAME?—CENSURE CONFOUNDED WITH JUDGMENT—THE SURVIVAL OF THE IDEA OF ROYALTY—ITS CAPACITY OF ASSIMILATION—THE ROYAL HOUSE OF DENMARK.

I

It is related of the charming young Princesse de Monaco, who went to the guillotine rouged lest her pallor should be attributed to fear, that she was so volatile and irresponsible that she thought diamonds were found in rings and fruit in baskets. As an example of the thoughtless, take-it-for-granted manner in which ideas or subjects too common to be surprising are usually regarded, the anecdote might apply with equal force to most of us.

How many, I wonder, in the crowds whose presence helps to deck the route along which a king will pass in state, ever give a thought to

what royalty really signifies to the nation of which he is the recognised head, if only a figure-head? How many, be they loyal or hostile, ever question the *reason* of the emotions they feel? Yet there is a reason, and a profound one too, so deeply embedded in human nature that it is, perhaps, only in times of revolution, when personal interests are at stake, and cherished ideals become persistent, that the average man and woman are more or less dimly conscious of its significance.

For the idea of royalty, like that of religion and democracy with which it forms a sort of trinity, as it were, has its origin in the mists that envelop the commencement of human society. It sprang out of the reverence that primitive man paid to the one who, by his superior knowledge, was able to control the invisible and mysterious forces of nature of which he was ignorant and afraid.

The first kings were, perhaps without exception, wonder-workers or magicians. In those remote times the affinity of magic to religion was very close, as it still is among savage tribes; the one co-operated and was confused with the other. Their subsequent hostility was caused by the gradual discovery, as human society advanced, of the inefficiency of magic. Hence it followed that kings at first were revered not only as priests, who by virtue of their magical arts were the natural intercessors between man and the gods, but as gods themselves. Krishna, Osiris, Odin—to instance but a few of the great deities of remote antiquity—were deified men. So universal was the belief in the divine origin of kings in early

times that many see in it a proof of the much-disputed theory of the homogeneity of prehistoric civilisation.

The possession of magical powers, though the chief, was not, however, the only road to a throne. The sword played no small part in the making of a king. Among the barbaric tribes of Europe, who were constantly at war with one another, the only possible king was often, as the name itself suggests, the Can-ing Man, the Man who Could and Would. Such men, also, were believed to possess magical powers and were revered accordingly.

Traces of this superstition lingered long in Europe. The origin of the belief that the French kings possessed the gift of healing by touch is lost in the night of time. In England Edward the Confessor was popularly believed to have derived the same gift from God, and to have bequeathed it to his successors. Queen Elizabeth frequently displayed this magical attribute of royalty, while the Stuarts, with their notorious claim to "divine right," practised it commonly with effect. It is stated that Charles I cured a hundred persons of both sexes in the Chapel Royal at Holyrood at one sitting. Within a month of his restoration to the throne Charles II proceeded to emulate him, and touched over one hundred thousand people for scrofula during his reign. The crowd on these occasions was sometimes unmanageable. Once, six persons who came to be healed by the royal hand were trampled to death. The case of Dr. Johnson, who was touched as a child by Queen Anne for king's evil, is celebrated.

Royalty, as may be supposed, was quick to turn to account the properties with which it was popularly believed to be endowed. Insistence on a divine right, or at least on a divine protection, was too sure a means of establishing and increasing royal power to be neglected. All the dynasties of antiquity boasted a divine descent. So great was the advantage derived from the claim that the aristocracies which always spring up around a throne, and without whose support, according to Madame de Staël, monarchy cannot exist, were encouraged to follow the kingly example. In Greece and Rome, even after royalty had fallen into discredit, the noblest families continued to boast of their descent from demi-gods or heroes. Pride in an ancient pedigree whose origin is lost in the mists of history is still common throughout the world.

In Rome the Cæsars, on assuming the imperial purple, caused themselves to be deified to justify their claim to supreme power. Later, Christianity, as Constantine the Great clearly perceived, was an additional source of strength to the idea of royalty, and the Church has ever since supported his view. Throughout the Middle Ages obedience to kings, as the vicars of God, was taught as a Christian duty. The sanctity of the majesty of kings is still recognised. Every coronation is a consecration.

In spite of the immense revolution in the conception of royalty that has taken place in the modern world, many instances could be cited to show how the influence of the old tradition of its divine connection continues to survive. Carlyle, though

anything but a sycophant, yielded to it unconsciously when, carried away by pity and indignation over the tragic fate of the *Princesse de Lamballe*, he described her as "king-descended, god-descended."

A still more curious instance occurred during the wedding procession through the streets of Madrid of the present King of Spain, Alfonso XIII. On this occasion a bomb was thrown at the monarch from a window along the route. In the panic that ensued the terrified populace, as if urged by some sub-conscious atavistic impulse, actually sought safety round the royal carriage, though there, if anywhere at such a moment, was the greatest danger.

Now the early conception of royalty was not so crude as it seems. Another, originating at the same time, was woven around it. Man in primitive times was very cunning. The instinct of self-preservation which caused him to deify his priest or king was not satisfied with this means of protection alone. To make sure of always enjoying it, he sought to obtain a guarantee of good faith.

The elevation of the king into a human god was contingent on his continuing to perform the wonderful protective functions by the possession of which he had attained divine eminence. The king existed in the popular mind solely for the benefit of his subjects, and his life was valuable to them, and he was worshipped only so long as he faithfully discharged the duties of his position.

The moment he failed he was divested of his divinity, and the homage and veneration he had received changed to hatred and contempt. The punishment for failure was death, exile, or complete repudiation. Indeed, not only were kings killed in early times when their power to protect failed, but to prevent such a contingency they were often killed after reigning a fixed time. So intense was the desire for protection that no precaution was too great to obtain it.

This early conception of the king as the *servant*, rather than the *ruler*, of the people is the origin of the idea of Democracy.

But the limitations thus set to royal authority proved ineffectual. The penalty attached to kingship created a rift between kings and their subjects which deepened as society advanced. History is one long record of man's attempt to destroy the Frankenstein, as it were, he had created. National or racial characteristics determined the nature of this struggle. In Asia, where the idea of royalty was strongest, it took the form of assassinations and the overthrow of dynasties, in which whole nations were engulfed. In Israel denunciations and threats of divine vengeance were hurled at the kings, most of whom were accused of "doing evil in the sight of the Lord." The European temper was different. Most of the Greek states succeeded in banishing their kings, though ever living in fear of their return. The Spartans alone managed to bend them to their will. Rome, early in her history, expelled her kings, only in the end to fall completely under the sway of deified despots.

In England the struggle between the throne and the people was complicated by the attempt of a foreign power to subject both. The re-statement by James I and his successor of the old doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings was no empty form of speech. In a Protestant country but lately freed from the shackles of Rome it was interpreted as the divine right of the secular government, of which the king was the recognised head, to remain free from papal control. In the seventeenth century all theories were theories of divine right. Thus the popular belief that kingship was in some special way under divine protection developed in England into a democratic principle. The effect of this conception on the world was enormous. A century later the struggle ended with the triumphant reassertion of the original conception of royalty, which was, as Fénelon said, that "kings were made for the people, and not people for the kings."

The French Revolution was the deification of democracy. Henceforth it mattered little whether kingship was hereditary or elected; kings or presidents, or whatever they were called, it was the people only who were divine.

II

The eighteenth century was royalty's hey-day. The religious wars, with their strong democratic tendencies, were long past. In France the Fronde, that futile aristocratic protest, had ended, as it was bound to do, in acquiescence. In England the "trouble," as the triumphant partisans of

royalty termed the Civil War, had been composed in the English fashion by compromise. Everywhere in Europe the institution of royalty appeared, to the outward eye at least, inviolable.

The effect on royalty itself, however, of such splendid security had been injurious. In the process of evolution the caste of kings seemed to have lost nearly all the attributes of the human species. The Courts in which this hybrid breed were propagated were peculiarly well adapted to produce an abnormal type. The air in these incubators was steeped in intrigue and conspiracy, treachery and deceit; and the temperature was maintained at the requisite degree by a lamp whose fierce light penetrated unceasingly day and night into every crook and cranny of the royal soul. Privacy was a privilege that royalty, with all its power, could never acquire. For the same reason it was compelled to accept flattery as truth. Though free to think and act as it liked, its condition was one of splendid bondage.

At Versailles, which every Court in Europe sought to imitate, the laws of etiquette were observed in preference to the king's comfort or convenience. It is related that, on one occasion, the sovereign was obliged to stand naked and shivering in the royal bedroom because the great lord who alone had the privilege of handing him his nightshirt was absent. Death was the punishment for touching the person of the Queens of Spain. One of them, thrown from her saddle when riding, was only saved from a terrible death by two gentlemen who *dared* to free her foot from the stirrup in which it was caught. So conscious

were they of the peril to which this act exposed them that they prepared to flee the country, and were only prevented by the royal clemency which in its turn *dared* to pardon them. Marie Antoinette's high-spirited and continuous defiance of etiquette, it is well known, contributed largely to hasten the French Revolution.

The sub-conscious souvenir of what untold terror and misery must have lurked in all this denaturalising etiquette, which had itself evolved from the frightful laws that regulated the lives of kings in the earliest times !

The etiquette of the Spanish Court was anthropophagic. In that sombre atmosphere there was a perpetual suggestion of sacrifice. The palace of the Escorial was also a mausoleum. No gleam of joy seems ever to have penetrated the lives of the Spanish autocrats. Immured in their grave of a Court, haunted by the fear of death, they all became morbid and many of them mad. One of them even descended in state with his whole Court into the royal vaults of the palace and caused the tombs to be opened, in order that he might gaze upon his dead ancestors.

In France, on the contrary, owing to the lighter, happier nature of the people, death was never mentioned in the presence of royalty. A tutor of one of the Dauphins so shocked him by making use of the expression "the late king" that he apologised by explaining it was a "title kings took." To die at Versailles was an offence. When Madame de Vintimille died there suddenly, though she was at the time the adored favourite of Louis XV, the order was given that her body should be instantly

removed from the palace. In their haste to obey, those who had charge of the corpse were obliged to leave it in a stable for lack of a better place. The very kings themselves, for all their splendour and majesty in life, were hurried into their tombs as quickly as possible without pomp or ceremony. "*Le roi est mort ; vive le roi !*" was the phoenix-like formula observed when the death of a king was announced.

That under such circumstances character should become distorted and natural feeling atrophied is not surprising. The attitude of royalty to itself was abnormal. Of all the ties that bound royal families together, the weakest was the tie of consanguinity. Relationship meant little or nothing to royalty. The *majesty* of the king created a barrier between him and his family. Thus mutually estranged, intimacy became well-nigh impossible. Suspicion, once aroused, often ended fatally. Peter the Great and Philip II actually killed their sons, and Frederick the Great, when a boy, barely escaped a similar fate. There was not a dynasty in Europe but contained in its annals the record of some monstrous crime.

The comparatively few instances of devotion are morbid and unnatural. It is related of a certain English king that his grief on losing an idolised son was so great that he never smiled again. The devotion of Peter I of Portugal to the memory of his passionately loved and unfortunate wife, Inez de Castro, was such that he caused her body to be disinterred and crowned in state beside him. The affection that existed between Frederick the Great and his sister Wil-

helmina sprang out of their common fear of their father, and was intensified by their common sufferings. Rare, indeed, are the instances of healthy, natural affection. The case of the gentle and saintly Madame Elizabeth, who refused to desert Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, and by so doing shared their tragic fate, is perhaps unique in history.

But while family instincts were distorted, and jealousy and hatred took the place of what should have been trust and love, the craving for human sympathy could not be stifled. Royalty consequently sought to obtain from without what it was impossible to procure from within itself, and to this inextinguishable passion of all humanity for love and friendship were due the favourites of kings, male and female, whose sinister influence has been felt in every country.

The extreme selfishness and callous indifference that resulted from the starving of the most natural instincts and emotions of human nature rendered it impossible for royalty to sympathise with or understand the needs of the people. The fate of nations depended solely on the personal interests of their rulers. "*L'état, c'est moi*," as Louis XIV declared, was an actual fact. The State was a royal chattel, and treated as such. The Prince de Ligne relates hearing the Empress Catherine and Joseph II reckoning up the number of people each possessed and bartering them by the province-full as if they were cattle.

It was the custom in Spain and Portugal to celebrate royal marriages by an *auto-da-fé*. In England the sovereign was addressed, and still is

officially, with the humility characteristic of the grandiloquent servility of the East. The example set by royalty was followed by their dependents. At the French Court it was denied that anyone of lesser rank than a baron was human. It is true Madame de Sabran once told the Regent d'Orléans that he was made of the same mud as a lacquey ; but this was said in the intimacy of a *petit souper* in the *petits appartements*, when the cynical Regent allowed his favourites to say what they liked under the influence of champagne. Indeed, so far did the royal indifference to the common herd go, that the Comte de Clermont, when lacking other amusement, used to ascend to the roof of his palace and shoot at the passers-by in the street below !

There are still many, as in the French Revolution, who deem its fury excusable and a just retribution for this hideous human callousness. But was royalty altogether to blame ? Surely in justice to itself democracy, which still persists, in spite of all its protestations, to regard men as cannon-fodder, may be excused from asking such a question. Censure and judgment are too often confounded. The history of the last years of the old regime is filled with proofs that royalty was conscious of the manner in which it had been deformed and strove vainly to find a cure. In the grip of the dead hand of feudalism it was utterly helpless.

To condemn royalty is not to judge it. That it has survived the French Revolution is its justification. There must have been some deep reason,

some profound truth after all in its early conception which human nature acknowledged, and to which it owes its persistence.

“Failure,” said Guizot, “to consider royalty as an idea and to understand the principle which is the very essence of its conception; failure to take into account the various forms this idea is capable of assuming and all the various principles to which it is able to attach itself; failure, I repeat, to consider royalty from this double and vast point of view is the reason why the rôle it has played in the history of the world, as well as its nature and effect, are so often misunderstood.”

In this connection, emphasis should be laid on the ability of royalty to attach itself to ideas seemingly opposed to it—a characteristic which has been claimed as one of its greatest qualities.

The necessity of assimilating monarchy and democracy, if the monarchical principle was to be maintained, was quickly and generally understood after Waterloo by royalty. How far this has succeeded in the various countries of Europe may be measured by the capacity of royalty, as Saint-Priest puts it, “to contract and expand to suit time, place, nationality, and the progress of civilisation.”

Nowhere has this capacity been greater, or have its results been more successful, than in the Royal House of Denmark.

CHAPTER II

EARLY INFLUENCES

I. BIRTH OF THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA—HER PARENTS—A MARRIAGE FOR LOVE—STRAITENED CIRCUMSTANCES—EXTREME SIMPLICITY AND CONTENTMENT OF PRINCE AND PRINCESS CHRISTIAN'S MODE OF LIFE—THE IMPRESSION IT PRODUCED. II. POLITICAL EVENTS OF THE PRINCESS'S EARLY LIFE—THEIR INFLUENCE ON HER FUTURE—KING CHRISTIAN VIII OF DENMARK—HIS PICTURESQUE PERSONALITY—HIS ADVENTUROUS EARLY CAREER—THE "CHAMPION OF LIBERTY"—EXTRAVAGANT HOPES BASED ON HIS ACCESSION—THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT—THE KING'S DIFFICULTIES—THE DEMANDS OF THE DANES—OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN—IMPOSSIBILITY OF SATISFYING BOTH—THE QUESTION OF THE SUCCESSION—ITS IMPORTANCE—HOW THE KING TRIED TO SETTLE IT—INDIFFERENCE OF THE DANES—UNPOPULARITY AND DEATH OF CHRISTIAN VIII. III. A DYING DYNASTY—FREDERICK VII, THE LAST OF HIS LINE—A ROYAL BOHEMIAN—HIS SCANDALOUS LIFE—THE COUNTESS DANNER—POPULARITY OF FREDERICK VII—ITS SECRET—ATTEMPTED SEPARATION OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN FROM DENMARK—THE FIRST SCHLESWIG WAR—THE TREATY OF PEACE—THE SETTLEMENT OF THE SUCCESSION BY THE POWERS—PRINCE CHRISTIAN RECOGNISED AS HEIR TO THE THRONE—THE CORNER-STONE OF THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA'S CAREER. IV. EARLY LIFE OF THE PRINCESS—THE CASTLE OF BERNSTORFF—EDUCATION OF THE PRINCESS—A UNITED FAMILY—THE POWER OF SENTIMENT—THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA AT SIXTEEN—HER FIRST MEETING WITH THE PRINCE OF WALES.

I

ON the 1st of December, 1844, a daughter was born in the Gule Palais at Copenhagen to the young Prince and Princess Christian of Glucksburg. At her christening a few days later she was named Alexandra Caroline Marie Charlotte Louise Julie. The first name, Alexandra, was that of her god-mother, the only daughter of the Czar Nicholas I of Russia, and her aunt by marriage.

At the time of her birth her father little dreamt

that he would one day become King of Denmark. Though related to the reigning dynasty, which was threatened with extinction, the Glucksburgs were so far removed from the line of succession that they never even contemplated putting in a claim. Prince Christian, indeed, started life with very limited prospects. He was the fourth son and the sixth of the nine children of the Duke of Glucksburg, whose fortune had been so crippled by the disasters of the Napoleonic wars that he was quite unable to make any provision for his family. On his death his eldest son succeeded to his impoverished dukedom, while various friends and relations charitably undertook to look after the others. The Hereditary Prince of Denmark, nephew and heir of the king, whom he afterwards succeeded, took charge of Prince Christian, then a boy of thirteen. Having educated the lad, he provided him with a commission in the Guards. Beyond advancing him in the service, even when he became king, he could do little for his protégé. His commission, however, served to give the young man a career worthy of his rank, which was all he was entitled to expect and all that he desired.

Later, when the Hereditary Prince succeeded to the throne as Christian VIII, and his only sister, the Landgravine of Hesse-Cassel, paid him a visit accompanied by her two daughters, Prince Christian fell deeply in love with the younger, Louise. She returned his affection, and, as both the King and the Landgravine approved of the match, they were married. The fact that the young couple would have nothing but Prince Christian's pay as a Captain in the Guards on

which to live was apparently the last thing to which any of them gave a thought.

King Christian lent them the modest Gule Palais in Copenhagen as a residence, and from time to time doubtless they received some financial assistance from him and the Landgravine; but it could never at any time have been great, and they did not rely on it. But, straitened though their circumstances were, Prince Christian and his wife seemed quite content. They did not resort to any of the various expedients by which people endeavour to keep up appearances. The extreme simplicity of their tastes saved them from extravagance, and the consciousness of their rank from the false pride with which so many in inferior stations are afflicted. Princess Christian, before her marriage, had been taught the art of house-keeping, and it afforded her now no small pleasure to turn her knowledge to account. A capable manager, she personally supervised every detail of her modest establishment. Her husband's admiration for her capacity was as boundless as it was justified.

"Ah," he replied once to some friendly sympathiser, "I am not as poor as I seem. You forget I have a pearl without price."

Household cares were, however, by no means Princess Christian's sole preoccupation. As the presiding genius of the home, she found time for everything. Keenly alive to her husband's welfare, she kept herself well posted in Danish politics, and by corresponding frequently with her numerous relations, to whom she paid yearly visits, she was well informed on current European

affairs. Prince Christian did nothing without consulting her. His reliance on her was such that in after-years, when he became king, people used to say of him : "*Le roi, c'est la reine.*" That Bismarck, whom she regarded with abhorrence, considered her a formidable enemy is proof of her ability. In fine, as was said of the Countess Waleska, the wife of Napoleon III's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Princess Christian was the "best page in her husband's portfolio."

Their personalities were such as would have rendered them popular under any circumstances. Never at any time in their lives, even when political passions were bitterest, was the personal popularity of Christian IX or his queen in doubt. In these early years the example they afforded of unruffled conjugal felicity, under conditions that are generally considered unfavourable to it, appealed powerfully to the popular imagination, which was struck not so much by their simple family life—few in Denmark, high or low, lived otherwise—as by the unusual spectacle of royalty finding happiness without losing dignity in the practice of simplicity. It had the effect on the public of humanising royalty. Nor was the effect on Prince Christian and his family less significant. Royalty cannot live like the people without becoming democratic.

II

The principal influences to which the Princess Alexandra was subjected in this probationary period of her parents' lives, during which her

childhood and girlhood were passed, were dynastic and domestic. The former determined her destiny, the latter her character.

The dynastic influences began with the interest which Christian VIII took in her father's career. Though he died when she was only four years old, an age at which she could retain no recollection of him, she indirectly owed him much. He was one of those kings who require only a great stage on which to act their rôle to compel posterity to remember them. For he possessed in an eminent degree those picturesque attributes which, when attached to great ability, embalm a reputation and preserve it from decay. But unfortunately for his fame, though gifted with mental qualities of a high order and a generous character, rendered conspicuous by a romantic career and a seductive personal appearance, he was destined to waste his talents in the obscurity of an insignificant theatre.

His temperament was a curious blend of the artistic and the practical. As a boy he had received a careful education, and a wide experience of human nature acquired subsequently enabled him to discriminate between vulgar political motives and sincere national aspirations. Art and science appealed to him equally and strongly. He was at once an amateur and a critic. Whether it was a question of a work of art, a scientific investigation, or a political problem, his opinion was equally valuable. At a Council of State his was the voice that carried the most weight.

In his youth, before his accession, he had been the royal representative in Norway. This king-

dom, whose union with Denmark originated in the right of the House of Oldenburg to the throne of each, had long desired a separate and independent existence. The relations between the Danes and the Norwegians, in spite, or perhaps on account of, this long association were strained to the snapping point. When Christian arrived in Norway he had immense difficulties to contend with, yet he persuaded the Norwegians not to secede. How much this decision, which events prevented them from maintaining, was due to his tact and personal popularity may be judged from the fact that when the Swedes, who had long coveted Norway, sought to annex it, the Norwegians proclaimed their independence and elected Christian as their king.

The Congress of Vienna, however, refused to sanction these proceedings, and, to punish Denmark for having allied herself to Napoleon, assigned Norway to Sweden, whose king, though he owed his throne to Napoleon, had betrayed him. From which one may judge the quality of the milk of human kindness that human justice is supposed to contain. “ ‘*Mais oui,*’ *dit le petit caporal au prêtre, ‘c’est bien vrai, le bon dieu est toujours avec les grands bataillons !’* ”

But, though compelled to yield to superior force, Christian managed to have a clause inserted in the treaty that obliged the Swedes to preserve the constitution and respect the liberties of the Norwegians. As the farewell gesture of the House of Oldenburg to Norway, over which it had reigned for nearly four centuries, it was sublime. From it one may gather some slight idea of the character and ability of Christian VIII.

On his return to Denmark the people received him with open arms as "the champion of liberty." It was confidently expected that he would be given a share in the government of the country; but the king, jealous of his popularity, sent him to a distant province, where he was wasted. Unable to endure the tedium of such an existence, he resigned, and for several years travelled extensively over Europe. Wherever he went he was treated with the greatest distinction. The Danes regarded the honours heaped upon him as so many tributes to the democratic principles he was supposed to cherish and intended to put into practice when, in the fulness of time, he should succeed to the throne.

The hopes based on his accession, however, proved too extravagant to be realised all at once. The Liberals expected him immediately to give them a constitution, which, out of respect for the prejudices of the old king, who was greatly esteemed for his services to the country in the Napoleonic war, they had chivalrously refrained from demanding during his life. But Christian did not, or could not, do what they desired. Perhaps he was not prepared to divest himself of absolute power entirely; or, perhaps, aware that he was the most enlightened man in the kingdom, he did not believe the time was ripe for such a change. If the latter was his reason he was undoubtedly in the right. For no constitution that the wit of man could have devised would have proved acceptable to both Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein, which desired independence, as Norway previously had done.

These Duchies were originally fiefs—Schleswig of Denmark and Holstein of the Holy Roman Empire—the sovereignty of both having become vested in the course of time in the House of Oldenburg. The King of Denmark, as Duke of Schleswig, was consequently his own vassal, while as Duke of Holstein he was a member of the German Confederation. In 1658, by certain well-defined treaties, the feudal nexus of Schleswig with Denmark was dissolved, while that of Holstein with Germany was severed in 1806 by the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. Both Duchies thus became free sovereign states, only united to Denmark by the House of Oldenburg. The attempt of Denmark to ignore these fine distinctions and regard the Duchies as an integral part of the kingdom had resulted in the formation of a party whose object was complete separation.

The situation was still further complicated by a dynastic problem. With Christian VIII and his son the Oldenburg dynasty, which had reigned in Denmark for four hundred years, would expire. Such an event is always ominous. The passions and jealousies set loose at such a time are not only national but international. Cupidity runs amuck, and countries that have no real interest at stake are sucked into the whirlpool of war, riot, and revolution. In the present instance, as the question of the succession was unsettled, the passing of the House of Oldenburg was an event of European importance, and its sudden extinction—an ever-present possibility—might easily lead to complications that would deprive Denmark

not only of Schleswig-Holstein but also of her own independence.

In the pass to which affairs were rapidly drifting in the country the succession was, therefore, unquestionably more important than the grant of a constitution. This Christian VIII fully realised, but the solution of the dynastic problem, to which the disgruntled Danes and the Separatist party in Schleswig-Holstein were equally indifferent, baffled his ingenuity.

It would, in any case, have been a difficult one. The monarchy in Denmark was originally elective. In the course of time, as generally happens, it had become hereditary. Christians and Fredericks, as each king was alternately called in Denmark, had succeeded one another without dispute in the male line for centuries. By an old family law of the royal house, females were entitled to succeed in default of males. As this contingency had never arisen, there was a doubt as to the validity of this law, which the Danish Parliament was the only authority capable of deciding. If valid, the throne would pass to the Landgravine of Hesse-Cassel and her heirs, who, as Germans, did not appeal to Danish sentiment.

Still less did the chief male claimant, the Duke of Augustenburg, who was descended in a direct male line from the younger son of a former king, and twice in the female line as well from the royal house. His claim was a powerful one, and, under ordinary circumstances, might have offered a reasonable settlement, not only of the succession, but of the differences between Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein, where the Augustenburgs were very

popular. But, as a leader of the Separatist party in the Duchies, he was anathema in Denmark. Accordingly he refrained from pressing his claim, but insisted on his right to succeed in Schleswig-Holstein. As this was equivalent to proclaiming the complete separation of the Duchies on the extinction of the Oldenburg dynasty, his attitude greatly exasperated the Danes.

To Christian VIII, however, who, after his Norwegian experiences, regarded the separation of Schleswig-Holstein philosophically, the elimination of the Duke of Augustenburg seemed to simplify matters. The next thing to do was to eliminate the German element. Accordingly, having persuaded the Landgravine, her son, and her elder daughter, to transfer their claims to Princess Christian, who in turn transferred hers to her husband, he proposed to the Danish Parliament that Prince Christian of Glucksburg should be recognised as the heir to the House of Oldenburg. Coming from a king who was no longer popular, the proposal was coldly received.

Its sole result was to establish a claim for Prince Christian to the succession.

III

The question was still unsettled when Christian VIII died two years later.

The Royal Family was now reduced to his widow,¹ Queen Caroline Amalie, and his successor,

¹ She was a sister of the Duke of Augustenburg, but, unlike him, wholly Danish in her sympathies. Highly cultured and philanthropic, she encouraged art and letters, and did much to improve

Frederick VII, his only son by a former wife, whom he had divorced for infidelity.

To the protection of the new king, who had been estranged from his father, Prince Christian had no claim whatever. They had nothing in common, yet Frederick VII, partly from political motives, partly from kindness of heart, being a good-natured, easy-going man, continued to befriend him.

Frederick was the antithesis of his father. Christian, with his love of art and science, was very much the *grand seigneur*. Cultivated and humane, he was always conscious of his rank. In the eighteenth century, to which he belonged by temperament, he would have been a benevolent despot—the best type of a pre-revolutionary king. His faith in democracy was that of a cultured dilettante. Liberty, to him, was nothing more than a political stratagem. This was why, perhaps, with all his capacity, he failed, while his son, who was neither brilliant nor dignified, and also belonged to another age, but who had the gift of identifying himself with his times, succeeded.

From his mother, the mere shadow of a name, who after her divorce lived a roving, questionable life of pleasure in Italy, Frederick inherited a Bohemian temperament. As a child he had been left entirely to the care of servants. His early life was scandalous, and even to the end

the condition of the poor. The first orphan asylum in Denmark was founded and supported by her. As a token of the esteem in which she was held, a statue was erected in her memory after her death by voluntary contribution. The work by Bissen stands in the Rosenburg Garden in Copenhagen—a quaint marble figure of a very benevolent old lady in an Early Victorian cap and dress. She was on the best of terms with Prince Christian's family.

he paid not the slightest heed to appearances. His chief companions were young men far beneath him in rank, with whom he associated on a footing of perfect equality.

To wean him from such undesirable company, a marriage was arranged for him with one of his cousins. It was very unhappy. After six years of neglect his wife divorced him. As a punishment he was exiled to Iceland, where it was said no Oldenburg had ever been before, and, when permitted to return, sent to a garrison in Jutland. To escape from this durance he married again. This marriage likewise proved a failure. His second wife, like the first, divorced him. This sealed the doom of the dynasty. There were no children by either marriage.

But, with all his vices, Frederick was generous, big-hearted, and sincere. Incapable of deception and meanness, he was outspoken in his contempt of sycophancy, and quick to forgive a wrong. Cruelty had no place in his nature. A hatred of restraint had imbued him with a spirit of tolerance. He was sympathetic to all who suffered from any sort of oppression.

To enable him to turn these fine qualities to account, which he had not the will to accomplish unaided, he required the influence of some strong, vivid personality with whom he was in perfect sympathy. And this, by some lucky chance, he found, when in the course of his profligate pursuit of pleasure he met Louise Rasmussen.

Though of humble origin, her parents had been able to give her an education of which she had taken full advantage. When first heard of she

was employed as a governess in a Norwegian family, a position she gave up to go to Paris, though for what reason or in what capacity is unknown. Perhaps it was there she became a *marchande des modes*, which is one of the rôles she is said to have filled in her chequered career. When she reappeared in Denmark it was as a dancer in the royal ballet in Copenhagen. Young, beautiful, and clever, she had many adorers, the chief of whom was Berling, a dissolute young man of good family, whose father owned the *Berlingske Tidende*, the principal newspaper in Denmark.

It was through Berling, who was Frederick's intimate friend and later his private secretary, that the future king first met her. The acquaintance ripened rapidly into a deep attachment, which endured till Frederick's death. On his accession he created her Countess Danner, and publicly married her, to the indignation of the Court. He would have recognised her as Queen, in spite of the protests of his ministers, but for her good sense in declining the honour. She appeared at the King's side, however, in public, though on these occasions she was invariably the only woman present, and maintained her questionable position with dignity.

To render herself popular she gave huge sums to public charities, but in this she was not actuated by purely selfish motives. That she really sympathised with distress is proved by the Frederick VII Institute, which she founded as a mark of gratitude to the King. Its object was to afford unfortunate girls of the working class the means and instruction to enable them to lead honest and

self-respecting lives. In the organisation and maintenance of this institution she took a deep personal interest, and on her death bequeathed it her entire fortune, estimated at 6,000,000 kroner.

But, try as she would, she never succeeded in turning public opinion in her favour. Society, though obliged to treat her with due respect by the King, would never consent to receive her, and the envy of the people, aroused by such an elevation from their ranks, subjected her to many bitter humiliations. She was frequently lampooned, and on one occasion publicly hissed when accompanying the King on a tour of inspection through the country. After Frederick's death she left Denmark, and lived principally in Italy, where she died some years later.

Like most royal favourites, the Countess Danner took an active interest in politics. Her opinions were fortunately in accord with the democratic spirit of the times, and, being gifted with shrewd common sense, her powerful influence was employed judiciously. It is said that ministers, far from objecting to her presence at Cabinet meetings, desired that she should attend them.

Governed by her, Frederick settled down seriously to the business of kingship. The year 1848, in which he succeeded to the throne, was a terrible test-time for royalty. Like a sieve, all that had survived the French Revolution was sifted through it. Everywhere thrones were overthrown or shaken to their foundations. At such times the value of morality and dignity in public life is at a discount. Frederick's irregular past, which had so outraged the conventions, proved now of

advantage to him. The dancers and demireps, the students and journalists, the political freelances and outcasts, the whole motley crew with whom he consorted, had helped him to understand and sympathise with the people. Liberty is the motto of Bohemia. There is a challenge in it which every Bohemian accepts. Being one himself, he was better prepared for the storm than any other king in Europe.

His first act, on his accession, was to grant Denmark the constitution it had failed to obtain from his father. It was very democratic. He had not the slightest compunction in divesting the monarchy of absolute power. He had no need of it himself; besides, he was the last of the Oldenburgs, so what did it matter? "The love of my people," he said, "is my strength."

Their gratitude was deep and enduring. He kept their love to the end, in spite of his vices. This was partly due to the spirit of conciliation he uniformly displayed, and partly to his democratic mode of life, which, by its absence of Court ceremonial, which he detested, appealed to the popular imagination of the time. He lived chiefly in the country, like any ordinary citizen, with the Countess Danner and a few intimate companions, passing his time, when not occupied with state affairs, hunting, fishing, or in the study of archæology, which was his pet hobby.

To the upper classes in Denmark, whom he regarded with bland indifference, he was an enigma of which they never found the key. Perhaps at bottom he was equally indifferent to the good opinion of the people. He never cared for

royalty, he was the last of his line, and he had no axe to grind. All he asked of life was the liberty to live as he pleased, and he was ever ready to grant the same liberty to his subjects.

His death was regarded as a national loss. He was buried in the Cathedral of Roskilde, the Valhalla of the Danish kings, with all the pomp and circumstance he had always disliked in life, and Bissen, the most famous sculptor of the day, was charged to cast his equestrian statue in bronze, which, *à la* Louis Quatorze, magnificently adorns the approach to the Christianborg Palace in Copenhagen.

To grant a constitution to a people who are in no mood to be refused is no doubt an admirable way to begin a reign. On Frederick's part, with the great storm of 1848 brewing on the political horizon, it was an act of expediency rather than of statesmanship. On the part of the Danes, who, in demanding it, totally disregarded the question of the succession, without first settling which no constitution could possibly work, it was an act of folly.

With the triumph of democracy the people have become the sole source of their political misfortunes, and no longer have the right to blame any but themselves.

The constitution was meant as a challenge to Schleswig-Holstein, and the Schleswig-Holsteiners at once took it up. With the aid of Prussia, they expelled the Danish garrisons and declared their

independence. The Duke of Augustenburg was proclaimed Sovereign Duke of Schleswig-Holstein.

The struggle that ensued was known as the First Schleswig War. It lasted three years, and ended victoriously for the Danes. The Duchies remained united to Denmark, and the Duke formally renounced all his claims, receiving as compensation a large sum of money. At the same time the Powers, including Prussia, bound themselves by the Treaty of London (1852) to maintain the integrity of Denmark and to settle the succession.

Lord Palmerston said of this treaty that "only three understood it—God, himself, and a German professor who died mad after understanding it." It was, however, not beyond the comprehension of Bismarck, as subsequent events proved.

On the advice of Frederick VII, the settlement the Powers made was the one his father had proposed six years before. The Danish Parliament accepted it now without demur, and by a protocol signed in London in 1852 Prince Christian of Glucksburg was recognised as Heir-presumptive to the Danish throne. To enable him to maintain his position with dignity he was given the Castle of Bernstorff and a suitable income.

This event, which occurred when the Princess Alexandra was eight years old, was the cornerstone of her future career.

IV

Notwithstanding their good fortune, Prince and Princess Christian continued to live pretty much as before. Their mode of life, based on two

popular ideas—the family and the home—is a striking example of the transformation that had taken place in royalty since the French Revolution. Under the influence of democracy the words “Royal Family” have acquired a domestic significance. Kings are no longer objects of awe, but of human interest. It is the Home now, not the Court, that matters. It is there, in these modern days, that the character of royalty is formed.

The Gule Palais in which the Princess Alexandra's earliest years were spent was merely an ordinary mansion. It was called Gule, or Yellow, because of its colour, and dignified with the name of “palace” because it belonged to the Crown and some member of the Royal Family always resided in it. The Amaliegade, in which it was situated, was near the harbour, along the shore of which was the Langelinie, the fashionable promenade of Copenhagen. The Princess's chief delight, as a little child, was to be taken there by her father to watch the ships. Another great pleasure, which she had in common with all Danish children, was produced by the fairy-tales of Hans Christian Andersen. One of her earliest recollections was being taken by her parents to witness the celebrations in honour of the constitution granted by Frederick VII.

After her father was recognised as Heir to the Throne, the family lived principally at Bernstorff. The castle had once belonged to the famous Struensee, the lover of Queen Caroline Matilda, George III's ill-fated sister. Many memories of him still lingered about the place. It was situated

in the midst of a fine park, not far from Copenhagen. In spring and summer the surrounding country was exceedingly beautiful and romantic.

It was an ideal place in which to bring up children, and the whole family became deeply attached to it. When Prince and Princess Christian first went to live at Bernstorff they had four children—Prince Frederick, aged nine, Princess Alexandra, aged eight, Prince William, seven, and Princess Dagmar, five. Princess Thyra was born the following year, and Prince Waldemar six years later. Like all the Glucksburgs, they grew up tall and distinguished-looking.

At Bernstorff, as at the Gule Palais, Princess Christian supervised the establishment personally. Thanks to the perfect understanding that existed between her and her husband, she had a free hand in its management. The responsibilities of each were clearly defined. At first Princess Christian taught her young children herself. Later, when they left the nursery, Prince Christian took charge of the boys, while the girls remained under the care of their mother.

Princess Christian expected much of her daughters. She taught them to make their own clothes, and instructed them as well in the art of house-keeping. Masters and governors were provided for the more refined accomplishments. Much attention was paid in those days to the study of deportment. From it the Princess Alexandra acquired the extreme grace of her carriage. Her dancing and riding instructors were loud in their praise. For music she had a special talent, and her progress was so rapid that she soon rivalled

her mother, who was a fine musician. She was deft, too, with her needle. A strip of ribbon in her fingers was like a wand in a magician's hand. For such studies as were elegant or amusing she had a natural aptitude, but in those that required serious application her progress was slow.

Punctuality was the rule of the establishment, and to conform to it was the most arduous of all the Princess's tasks. For unpunctuality at meals Prince Christian would make no allowances. It was with the greatest difficulty imaginable that she could arrive in time for the blessing, and often, by stopping on the sound of the gong to give one last fleeting glimpse at her mirror, she would be compelled to eat her meal in solitude.

She could never overcome this failing, and even on ceremonial occasions, when punctuality is essential, her attendants were obliged to resort to many a subterfuge to enable her to be ready in time.

In other respects her parents were always indulgent. She tried so hard to please them that it was impossible to scold her. Even as a child she possessed some strange quality which kindled affection. Alix, as she was called, was the favourite with all the family. Whenever some favour was desired, to the granting of which any difficulty attached, it was she who was delegated to make the appeal.

In Princess Christian's system of education hygiene occupied an important place, and much time was devoted to recreation in the open air. At Bernstorff the young princesses went for long walks or rides with their father and brothers.

The whole country for miles around, with its romantic forests and castles, was familiar to them. When in Copenhagen they were constantly to be seen on the Langelinie, or strolling in the Ostergade, where the shop-windows afforded them infinite pleasure. In summer the whole family, packed into one large, old-fashioned coach, drove to Klampenborg to bathe in the sea.

Their evenings were generally devoted to music. This taste was a great resource, as it enabled the princesses to see something of the world beyond the family circle. In Copenhagen, during the season, they went frequently to the Opera and to musical entertainments in private houses, when the programme often included a *morceau* for eight hands, executed by the "family Christian."

It was a placid, regular, monotonous existence, but healthy and happy. How happy those annual reunions in the years to come proved when the brothers and sisters, whom splendid destinies had separated, returned to Bernstorff to revisit together the scenes of their childhood!

The Princess never forgot her childhood's home. It was endeared to her by a thousand childish associations. With every tree in the park, every nook and cranny of the old castle, she was familiar. In the lofty position to which destiny had raised her she liked to recall the days when she sat unknown and obscure upon the chintz settees at Bernstorff, looking out over the level fields of Zeeland towards the Baltic, which could be seen gleaming in the distance between the waving boughs of the old beeches, speculating pensively on what the future had in store for her, and envying girls

who were not doubly restricted as she was by high birth and slender means.

Neither she nor any of her family had the faintest trace of the feeling which causes a vulgar *parvenu* to hide the relics of his humble past. Many stories are told of her parents, which prove how unspoilt they were by the fortune that raised them to the throne of Denmark, to which neither of them had dreamt of aspiring. From Bernstorff to Marlborough House, with Windsor in perspective, is a change hardly to be paralleled in private life, and it pleased the Princess, in after-days, to talk of her past and to show people the house in which her modest girlhood was spent.

The happy monotony of this existence was temporarily broken by the confirmation of herself and her brother Frederick. The ceremony, which took place shortly before the Princess's sixteenth birthday, was celebrated with great pomp in the chapel of the Palace of Christianborg. Confirmation is regarded in Denmark as the first important event in life. It marks the end of childhood and the beginning of responsibility.

From this day the Princess Alexandra had a room to herself, which she was permitted to furnish according to her own taste, and where she could enjoy real privacy, which is only possible for royalty in such a home as Prince and Princess Christian's. Heretofore, outside the family circle, she was merely one of Prince Christian's three daughters, a pretty child—they were all that—nothing more. Now she suddenly blossomed into womanhood. People noticed that she was tall, slim, and beautiful, and began to wonder what

the eldest daughter of the Heir to the Throne was like, with her fair hair, dazzling skin, and the blue of the Kattegat in her eyes, and whom she would marry.

Soon, very soon, observed under that terrible, steady throne-light that always beats on royalty, all Denmark learnt that the Princess Alexandra possessed a lively and cheerful disposition, a gentle and amiable nature, and an indescribable charm of which all were conscious who came into contact with her. From the attention she devoted to her personal appearance it was evident that she was fond of dress and adornment. To women, who understand the reason of this feminine vanity, this was an additional attraction. By extolling her taste, which they knew to be correct, they gave her personality a publicity that rendered its subtle and unaffected charm more conspicuous. Her name was soon a familiar one in every home in Denmark, and, so prone are people to advertise and applaud whatever enhances the credit of the great, she was admired by thousands who had never seen her.

But princesses of the blood, however popular and lovable, are seldom permitted to flourish in the soil from which they spring. Already the parterre to which this beautiful flower was to be transplanted was being prepared in the strangest and most secret way.

CHAPTER III

THE MARRIAGE

I. QUEEN VICTORIA AT EIGHTEEN—THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCE OF WALES—THE JOY OF THE NATION—EARLY SPECULATION AS TO HIS MARRIAGE—THE GREAT IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO IT—THE LACK OF ELIGIBLE PRINCESSES—THE QUEST FOR A BRIDE—THE SUGGESTION OF A MAID OF HONOUR—QUEEN VICTORIA'S APPROVAL—THE PROGRESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS—THE MEETING IN THE CATHEDRAL OF SPEIER. II. SUDDEN DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT—INTERRUPTION OF THE MARRIAGE PROJECT—DIFFICULTY OF RESUMING THE NEGOTIATIONS—THE NECESSITY FOR SECRECY—QUEEN VICTORIA VISITS BRUSSELS—THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA AT OSTEND—HER MEETING WITH THE QUEEN—TO BE OR NOT TO BE?—THE QUEEN IS "QUITE ENCHANTED"—A ROYAL PROPOSAL—STRANGE DELAY IN ANNOUNCING THE BETROTHAL—HOW THE NEWS WAS RECEIVED IN DENMARK—IN ENGLAND. III. DENMARK "EN FÊTE"—DEPARTURE OF THE PRINCESS—REMARKABLE OVATIONS SHE RECEIVED EVERYWHERE ON HER JOURNEY—POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE ATTACHED TO HER ON THE CONTINENT—WHAT ENGLAND EXPECTED. IV. HOW LONDON AWAITED THE BRIDE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES—HER ARRIVAL AT GREENWICH—THE ROYAL ENTRY INTO LONDON—DELIRIOUS ENTHUSIASM OF THE PEOPLE—DEMOCRACY PAYS HOMAGE TO ROYALTY—OPINIONS OF THE PRESS. V. THE WEDDING IN ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR—MAGNIFICENCE OF THE SPECTACLE—THE DIGNITY OF THE PRINCE OF WALES—THE ARRIVAL OF THE BRIDE—THE ADMIRATION SHE AROUSED—IMPRESSION OF DICKENS—OF THACKERAY—QUEEN VICTORIA'S EMOTION—THE NATIONAL REJOICINGS—TENNYSON'S "WELCOME."

I

QUEEN VICTORIA, who was only eighteen on her accession, had reigned four years when her eldest son was born. She had come to the throne at a test-time for the monarchy. Destined to become the greatest moral and religious influence of the nineteenth century, little was known of her character or ability. Among the middle and lower classes there was a republican tendency, due partly to the influence of the French Revolution,

partly to the unpopularity of her immediate predecessors. Her marriage to a foreigner of whom nothing was known was viewed with suspicion, and, though the Prince Consort afterwards succeeded by his worth and rectitude in making himself respected, he was never really popular.

In accepting her as Queen the nation felt it was making an experiment. Her accession was regarded as a sort of *pis aller*. It had the advantage of ridding the nation of George III's undesirable sons and of putting an end to the unpopular Hanoverian succession. She was, moreover, a woman, and it was thought that a queen might be more easily controlled than a king.

In the struggle between the old order and the new for supremacy in the State she was like some frail bridge over a yawning chasm. Her youth, sex, and inexperience appealed to the imagination. There was a pathos in the solitary little figure who was so evidently anxious to please. So the people chivalrously gave her the benefit of whatever doubts they had, and consented to make the most of her.

Everything that concerned her became of immense importance to the nation. This interest was entirely selfish. It was not inspired, at first at least, by sympathy for the sovereign, but by popular anxiety. This, however, silently told in her favour. Her life and reign did the rest.

The birth of her first child had been looked forward to with almost feverish excitement. It happened to be a daughter. The disappointment was great. A son was wanted to ensure the succession, and give a sense of security and con-

tinuity to the new regime. He would preclude the possibility of a King of Hanover again claiming to rule England, a prospect which the people resented.

The birth of the Prince of Wales was, therefore, regarded as an event of the greatest importance to the nation. Occurring on Lord Mayor's Day, London's historic holiday, it was considered as a happy omen, and the news was received with enthusiastic joy throughout England. His birth restored the prestige of the monarchy. It made him, in the most literal sense of the phrase, the hope of the nation. This title, which can only be conferred by the people, is the most sublime and dangerous that a man can bear. Many have been crushed by its weight. How well the Prince of Wales bore it and justified it all the world knows. But perhaps it is as well that the nation should have its share of the credit, for did it not assist him right loyally from first to last to bear the burden ?

To few mortals has Fortune ever showed herself more benignant. Blessed with a quality that had the wonderful property of removing every obstacle from his path, and making what in others would have been unpardonable appear excusable in him, he lived on the crest of the wave of Good Luck, passing through life from the cradle to the grave as he entered it, with the applause of the world ringing in his ears. He had the good fortune to be born at the psychological hour of a great period in history and to die before it passed. All that life has to offer of its best was given to him, even its rarest and most unique gift, the gift denied

Solomon in all his glory, the gift of not knowing that all is vanity.

His marriage was a European event. His position as heir to the throne of a world-wide empire gave it an international significance. In England it was regarded as scarcely less important than his birth. Already before he had attained his eighteenth birthday speculation was rife on the subject. On the 5th of July, 1858, the *Times*, in an article headed "The Prince of Wales and his Destined Bride," expressed the following opinion :

"To all present appearances our future monarch's choice of wife is positively limited to exactly seven ladies of royal blood—unless, indeed, he selects a consort much older than himself. This will, doubtless, appear startling to some of our readers, but is nevertheless true. The following list (compiled from authentic sources by a correspondent who has taken much pains in investigating this subject) comprises the only ladies of royal blood who, as Protestants, are eligible for the hand of the Prince of Wales :

"(1) Princess Alexandrine, daughter of Prince Albert of Prussia. (2) Princess Anne of Hesse-Darmstadt, niece of the Duke of Hesse and the Empress of Russia. (3) Princess Augusta of Holstein-Glucksburg. (4) Duchess Wilhelmina of Württemberg. (5) Princess Alexandra (daughter of Prince Christian) of Denmark. (6) Princess Mary of Saxe-Altenberg. (7) Princess Catherine of Oldenburg, sister of the Grand Duchess Nicholas of Russia.

"Without venturing upon prophecy, we are disposed to think that No. 5 will be considered the

most eligible lady, Prince Christian being Heir-presumptive to the throne of Denmark."

The *Times*, however, was alone in this assumption. Everything seemed to point to a German alliance. It was the desire of both Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, and Germany, moreover, was practically the only country where a Protestant princess was likely to be found. In Germany, indeed, where Bismarck's secret and subtle policy for the aggrandisement of Prussia was at this time engaged in encouraging the longing for racial unity, the wish was father to the thought. The English Court was looked on as a sort of German preserve, and it was taken for granted that the Prince of Wales, like his mother and sister, would seek his consort in that country.

In 1860, shortly before the Prince's visit to Canada and America, there were rumours abroad that a matrimonial alliance between the Heir to the British Throne and a Princess of Prussia was in contemplation. The German newspapers, indeed, solemnly asserted that it had all along been determined—arranged, in fact—at the time of the wedding of the Princess Royal with the young Prince Frederick William of Prussia. It was even settled, so they said, that there should be a "double marriage" between the Royal Families of Great Britain and Hohenzollern.

In England, on the contrary, the idea of any German marriage was distinctly unpopular. It was generally believed that the object of these alliances, of which the Germans had always been fond, was to make the whole of European Royalty one vast family, the stalk or root of which should

be in Germany. From the sarcastic comments of the English press it was evident that the project, if really contemplated, would meet with bitter opposition. The *Times*, which in those days was justly regarded in England as well as out of it as a power to be reckoned with, even went to the length of warning the Government.

Whether Queen Victoria took it as such or not, she was far too prudent to make a hasty decision. The dearth of eligible princesses rendered the choice of a wife for her son and heir a serious business. How seriously she regarded it may be judged from the fact that she gave her daughter a list of the most suitable and requested her to report on them personally.

This tour of inspection having proved fruitless, the Princess Royal confided its secret to her favourite maid of honour, the Countess Walburga von Hohenthal, who was engaged to be married to Sir Augustus Paget, the British Minister at Copenhagen.

"My future husband being an Englishman and a diplomat," she says in the account¹ she has given of her conduct in this delicate affair, "I knew he would be discreet, and I confided to him the dilemma of 'no Princess' for the Prince of Wales.

"'But I know the prettiest, the nicest, the most charming,' he exclaimed. 'Princess Alix, the eldest daughter of Prince Christian, the future King of Denmark. She is only sixteen, and as good as she is pretty!'

¹ *Scenes and Memories*, by Walburga, Lady Paget. (Smith, Elder & Co. London, 1912.)

“ Armed with this knowledge, I went at once to the Princess and told her all about it.

“ ‘ You must tell the Queen at once as soon as you go to England,’ she said, ‘ and find out all you can in the meantime.’ ”

This commission proved as easy as it was delightful to the maid of honour, who soon had frequent opportunities of seeing the young Princess. On arriving in Copenhagen after her marriage, which occurred at this time, she at once made it her business to be presented to Princess Christian.

“ Her Royal Highness,” she says, “ had asked me to come quite informally, as she knew my husband so well and had often allowed him to visit her in the same way both in town and in the country. She was still a very pretty woman, with fine blue eyes and a good figure. Prince Christian came into the room whilst I was with the Princess, and we talked of his brothers, whom I remembered seeing in their smart Hussar uniforms as dashing young officers at my father’s house in the country, when they were quartered near there, and also of his sisters, whom I had seen quite lately. There was a delightful charm of simplicity and kindness about Prince Christian which won all hearts, and the patriarchal and unostentatious setting of the family life of this royal couple was most attractive.

“ After I had been with the Princess for a little time, I said that my husband had so often spoken to me of the Princess Alexandra that I hoped I might be allowed to see her. I was delighted when she came into the room, for I saw in her all the promise of her future loveliness and goodness.

She was like a half-open rosebud, and so simple and childlike in everything. Later on I made the acquaintance of the other children. It was charming to see the still youthful parents and their half-grown-up and growing children, all so happy and united together in such natural, healthy, and simple surroundings."

Needless to say, Lady Paget kept up a lively correspondence with her former mistress (who at this time, by the death of Frederick William IV of Prussia, had become Crown Princess); and in due course went to England well equipped with valuable information concerning the young Princess Alexandra.

On her arrival there she found the nation in a state of great anxiety. The ship in which the Prince of Wales was returning from America was ten days overdue. There had been frightful storms in the Atlantic, and the worst was feared. Queen Victoria alone kept up her spirits, outwardly at least, and refused to admit that there was any cause for alarm. The Prince of Wales's birthday was celebrated as usual at Windsor by a big dinner-party, to which the British Minister to Denmark and his young bride were invited.

Lady Paget sat next to the Prince Consort, who looked pale and worn with anxiety he could not conceal. The conversation naturally reverted to the Prince of Wales.

"I now saw my opportunity," she writes, "and when the Prince spoke of his son I ventured to beg him to forgive me if I alluded to a subject that had been kept secret, but that perhaps he might remember that I had accompanied the

Crown Princess the year before on a fruitless expedition to Germany; but I now thought the Princess so much searched for had been found, and I told him all I knew about Princess Alix. I heard him repeating it to the Queen, who was on his other side.

"After dinner Her Majesty asked me many questions about Princess Alix and to send her as many photographs as I could find."

Six days later the Prince of Wales reached Plymouth safely. For a time nothing more was heard of his marriage, but the seed Lady Paget had sown had fallen on fertile soil. The Crown Princess continued eager for news.

"I am specially grateful," she wrote in the spring after her brother's return from America, "for your last letter, which is so full of the business I have so much at heart. I own my interest increases the more I hear of the person in question, and much good has been heard of her in England too. What a pity were she to make another marriage!

"In the first place, it would be desirable to find out whether she is not coming some time to Germany. I should be so enchanted to make her acquaintance.

"You have a certain talent in making naïve remarks. I should have no objection to your compromising *me* slightly, not as an official person, but as *my* friend, and if you were to be a little indiscreet about the young lady."

Lady Paget did as she was bidden so successfully that an arrangement was made that the Crown Princess and her husband should go to

Strelitz for a few days to see her cousin the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg, while the Princess Christian and her daughters were also paying a visit there. The greatest secrecy was observed as to the real motive of this visit, for all were aware that this marriage project at a time when the Schleswig-Holstein question was once more acute might raise political objections to it in Germany.

That the Crown Princess's impressions would be favourable Lady Paget never doubted; all the same, as her credit was involved in the success of these negotiations, it was with the greatest impatience she waited for news. In due course the Crown Princess wrote :

“ I have returned from Strelitz quite enchanted. Princess Alexandra is the most fascinating creature in the world. You did not say nearly enough. For a long time I have not seen anybody who pleases me so much as this lovely and charming girl. Not to speak of a Princess. She is simply quite charming. I have never seen Fritz so taken with anybody as he was with her. I will only add that I found Princess Christian very amiable and agreeable, and the little Dagmar a duck.”

Shortly afterwards the Crown Princess went to England, and gave her report in person to her parents. Both Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort were most favourably impressed. Apart from personal considerations, the match appealed to them in view of the political situation. But, while anxious for the Prince of Wales to marry, they did not wish to force him into any union against his will. Remembering the unhappy marriage of George IV and the scandal it had

caused, such a repetition was in every way to be avoided.

At the stage at which the negotiations had now arrived it was necessary that the Prince of Wales himself should meet the Princess Alexandra. As she was visiting her grandmother, the Landgravine of Hesse-Cassel, at Rumpenheim near Frankfort, and the Prince, who was touring the Rhine, happened to be in the neighbourhood, advantage was taken of the opportunity to arrange a meeting. It took place in Speier on September 14, 1861, their introduction being effected in the Cathedral, where both chanced to be sight-seeing at the same time. It was a momentous event in the lives of both. The next day they met again at Heidelberg. Writing to the faithful Baron Stockmar on the subject, the Prince Consort reported that "the young people seem to have taken a mutual liking to one another."

II

The negotiations had reached this interesting stage when they were suddenly interrupted by the premature death of the Prince Consort (December 14, 1861). The blow prostrated Queen Victoria. Life seemed to have lost all interest for her. It was not a time to talk of marriage. Her thoughts were of tombs, not of altars.

This calamity, however, actually facilitated the project. In her sorrow the Queen vowed to consecrate the remainder of her life to the memory of her husband. He had been the first to favour the idea of the Danish marriage, and was actually

engaged in realising it when he died. After she had recovered from the first shock of her grief, the Queen resolved that the Prince Consort's wishes should be carried out.

This was no easy matter. An heir to a throne is not married as one marries the son of a costermonger or a duke. It is not a case of mutual consent, a marriage licence, and the publishing of banns. The marriage of a Prince of Wales is not a private but a national concern. In the present instance there were foreign susceptibilities to be considered. The interminable Schleswig-Holstein question was approaching another of its violent crises. Germany was openly sympathising with the separatist movement in the Duchies. The marriage of the Prince of Wales to the daughter of the future King of Denmark was, therefore, well calculated to give rise to a serious international misunderstanding. To avoid arousing suspicion, the greatest secrecy was essential.

Apart from those immediately concerned, the Queen's intentions were known only to her uncle, King Leopold, whom she always consulted, the Crown Princess and her husband, and the Pagets. In the spring after the Prince Consort's death, and, in obedience to a wish he had expressed, she sent her son to travel in Egypt and the Holy Land. During his absence, which helped to avert attention from her schemes, the negotiations were resumed.

Immediately after the Prince of Wales had returned from this tour, Lady Paget, whom the Crown Princess had summoned to Berlin, wrote as follows to her husband in Copenhagen :

“ The first thing almost she said was that I was to tell you that you must come to Berlin on your way to England and stay a day, as she was most anxious to speak to you about several things. . . . It’s about Princess A.’s marriage. She wants you to remove the political scruples and difficulties, for the Crown Prince thinks it might lead to trouble in Germany.”

From the conduct of the Crown Princess in this affair, of which there are many similar instances in her life, it is easy to understand why this gifted woman was so unpopular in Germany. It was her misfortune—an unpardonable one in royalty—to be unable to identify herself with the country of her adoption. She could not distinguish between her sympathies and her interests, a failing to which all her sufferings can be traced.

Queen Victoria, who thoroughly understood the difference, did not attempt to enlighten her in this instance. By the marriage of the Princess Alice, which took place at this time, to the Grand Duke of Hesse, she completely deceived German opinion as to her real intentions. Who could suspect that with two British princesses married to German princes, England could think of thwarting German designs in Schleswig-Holstein by marrying the Prince of Wales to a Danish princess?

So cleverly had the Queen manœuvred that only one thing remained to render the intrigue successful. To Queen Victoria it was the most important thread of the web she was weaving. She had yet to see and approve personally of the paragon of whom she had heard so much.

After the marriage of the Princess Alice in

July 1862, it was arranged, with the help of Lady Paget, that the meeting should take place in September. Prince and Princess Christian and their family would then be at Ostend, and the Queen, who was going to Coburg at this time, decided to take advantage of the occasion to pay a short visit to King Leopold in Brussels, when the Princess Alexandra could be presented to her.

At the same time, with the double object of sounding public opinion in England and mollifying it in Germany, rumours of what was afoot were circulated in the press. The young couple were to meet in Brussels. Good news might be expected shortly from that friendly Court. The Prince admired and liked the Danish lady as he liked none other. At first these rumours were denied, but in a manner to encourage their continuance. Having familiarised the public in this way with the project, the next thing was to assure it that "the alliance would add no further complication to the Schleswig-Holstein question, or compel the British public to understand that mystery." This the *Times*, in an article that was evidently inspired, endeavoured to do on the eve of Queen Victoria's departure for Brussels.

One can imagine with what anxiety Princess Alexandra must have looked forward to this meeting. Though she had been kept very much in ignorance of what was going on, she knew that her marriage to the Prince of Wales, to which great secrecy and many obstacles were attached, had long been in contemplation. Everything about it tended to appeal to the imagination. It was not only the most brilliant that any

princess in the world could make, but the princely suitor was eminently attractive in himself. To the simple life of the impressionable girl he gave a romantic glamour. Their brief secret meeting, the difficulty of repeating it, and their long separation, seemed like the incidents in a fairy story of which she was the heroine. The very intrigues by which they were surrounded had an element of mystery. The peaceful seclusion of Bernstorff had become a cage in which, like one under the spell of enchantment, the Princess awaited her deliverer.

Nor was Princess Christian less interested. The prospect of such a splendid alliance was well calculated to gratify her. That her daughter should be deemed worthy to be the wife of so illustrious a prince was a tribute to the care and wisdom exercised in her upbringing. To her surely the credit was due. Furthermore, though she believed that this marriage would ensure not only a brilliant but a happy future for her daughter, which she desired above all things, she could not fail to perceive the advantage her family and country must derive from such an alliance. Was not the London protocol by which her husband had become heir to the throne of Denmark due to English influence more than any other? And was it not reasonable to suppose that, by the marriage of her daughter to the Prince of Wales this influence might be still further exerted in favour of Denmark in settling the Schleswig-Holstein question?

But Princess Christian was too shrewd to betray whatever she may have thought. It was not she

who had sought this union. The proposal had come to her without any effort on her part. Her policy was to efface herself as much as possible and let events take their course. Even now, when the desired goal was in sight, she was careful to refrain from any word or deed that might be prejudicial to her daughter. Remembering all the obstacles that had been surmounted in the long and tedious negotiations, all the hostile and powerful political influences that had to be thrown off the scent and evaded, might not something hitherto unsuspected arise at the last moment before the goal was reached? The nature of the Queen was well known. Unlike her too impulsive daughter, the Crown Princess, she seldom allowed her sympathies to get the better of her interests. In marrying her son it was not only of his interest that she was thinking, but of England's. An injudicious word, an unfavourable impression, might at the eleventh hour undo all that patient toil had achieved. On the meeting with the Queen everything depended. It was, therefore, for both mother and daughter a question of "to be or not to be."

To allay the nervousness that the young Princess might naturally feel at such a moment, her presentation to the Queen was quite informal. It took place in King Leopold's writing-room at the palace of Laeken. While waiting for the Princess and her mother to arrive, Queen Victoria sat in a small boudoir adjoining. To the dismay of Lady Paget, who was alone with her, and on whom the burden of the presentation had been placed, the Queen suddenly burst into tears.

“ Oh, you can understand what I feel,” she said. “ You have a husband you love, and you can realise what I have lost ! ”

The emotion of the Queen at such a moment was very characteristic. It had been given to very few of either sex or of any degree to experience the bliss of such a marriage as hers. The sudden manner in which she had been robbed of it had made its memory the crowning sorrow. The thought of the grave in which her happiness was buried coloured all she did. Very truly did she write to King Leopold after the Prince Consort's death : “ I live *on* with him, for him ; in fact, I am only *outwardly* separated from him, and *only for a time*.” By sheer force of her powerful will she kept her husband's memory alive long after his influence had begun to fade. This self-consecration was the key to the strength and weakness of her character. All who came into contact with her were obliged to take it into account. Her ministers soon detected it, and the ablest turned it to the advantage of the nation. In the lives of her numerous relations, whose destinies she controlled, it was a most important factor, and they too sought in turn to benefit by it.

When the Princess Alexandra's arrival was announced the Queen at once composed herself, and went into the next room, where King Leopold and his family, as well as her own children who had accompanied her to Brussels, were assembled. After presenting the Princess and her mother, Lady Paget withdrew to the boudoir and waited anxiously for the result of the Queen's impressions.

Half an hour later the Queen returned to the

boudoir "quite enchanted"—not only with the Princess, but with her mother, whose happy married life and simple domestic tastes closely resembled her own.

Dates throw a curious light on this affair. Queen Victoria left England for Brussels on the 3rd of September (1862). On the 4th, after the Princess Alexandra had been presented to her and the long-projected marriage had received her final sanction, she started immediately for Coburg, which she reached on the 5th. The Prince of Wales arrived in Brussels on the 8th, and on the 9th, according to Lady Paget, "after a grand *déjeuner* at Laeken, when the guests walked about in the gardens, he proposed to the Princess."

It was not, however, till the 16th that the betrothal was announced in the English press. But rumour in the meantime had been busy enough. The public were informed that the Prince of Wales and the Danish Princess had appeared in public and were received with acclamations by the people of Brussels; that they had visited Waterloo together; and that a grand review had been held in their honour, when an order of the day announced to the troops that all small punishments would be remitted, and that the duties of the next day would be the same as on holidays.

Considering the significance of such public events, why, one naturally asks, was the announcement of the betrothal, sanctioned by the Queen on the 4th and to which the Prince of Wales personally pledged himself on the 9th, delayed till the 16th?

No explanation has ever been given. Yet this

singular delay was evidently intentional. Can it be that the Queen and her ministers, knowing the political inferences that would everywhere be drawn from this marriage, hoped to lessen their importance by affecting to regard the matter as a private rather than a national event? The belated announcement on the 16th seems to give colour to this supposition.

“ We understand,” it stated, “ that the marriage of the Prince of Wales to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark has been privately settled at Brussels, and that it is based entirely on mutual affection and the personal merit of the young Princess, and is in no way connected with political considerations. The late Prince Consort, whose sole object was the welfare and happiness of his children, had long been convinced that this was a most suitable marriage. The knowledge of this is in itself a sense of deep gratification to the Queen, and will be as such satisfactory to the country.”

Thus, in this almost apologetic fashion, the British public were informed of the Prince of Wales's betrothal. The announcement, moreover, though inspired, if not actually penned, by the Queen herself, did not even pretend to be official, and the *Times*, in an obscure corner of which it was inserted, printed it without comment. *It was not till the 5th of November that the Queen's formal assent to the marriage was officially announced.*

If it was the intention of the Government to divest the affair of any suggestion of political significance the object was not attained. In Germany, where the marriage of two British princesses to German princes had been regarded

as a guarantee of English support in the settlement of the Schleswig-Holstein question, Queen Victoria was "openly accused of having betrayed the German cause."

The Danes also persisted in attaching the greatest political importance to the marriage. They regarded the announcement in the press merely as an official subterfuge, and joyfully counted on receiving the aid of England in the event of a war.

Even in England, in spite of repeated warnings in the press that the marriage had, and could have, no political significance, opinion was not unwilling to regard it in this light. While hoping that "they would not be compelled to understand the Schleswig-Holstein mystery," the people were by no means indifferent to the German designs on Denmark. The attitude adopted by a strong Power towards a weak one had aroused their sense of injustice. Long familiarised by rumour with the idea of the Danish marriage, they considered it was "a chance of improving England's influence in favour of peace." This hope, coupled with the announcement that the marriage was "based entirely upon mutual affection," which appealed powerfully to the English love of romance, aroused an extraordinary enthusiasm.

If the remark of Lady Palmerston, "I like the Danish connection. We have had too much of Germany and Berlin and Coburgs," expressed the general opinion, the reputed beauty and charm of the Princess Alexandra won her the sympathy of England on her own account before she arrived.

The distrust of the monarchy which had existed when Queen Victoria came to the throne twenty-five years before had not yet completely vanished. In spite of the ever-increasing greatness and prosperity England had experienced during her reign, the respect that her character and abilities inspired had yet, under the mellowing influence of time, to ripen into the veneration in which she was afterwards held. The press, voicing public opinion, was continually lecturing and criticising royalty in much the same fashion as formerly prompted Americans to "twist the lion's tail." This so-called "republicanism" was, in reality, merely a sort of irritated loyalty. The strictures on monarchical institutions conflicted with an inherent love of royalty and rank which always asserted itself when royalty, through some great joy or sorrow, appeared most human.

To this mute appeal to sympathy the British people, to their credit, have never failed to respond. On the present occasion it was wrought up to concert pitch. All England, it is no exaggeration to say, was vibrant with a joyful expectation. The real proof of the intensity and universality of the national interest is to be found, not in the various Reminiscences, Diaries, or Memoirs which express only the individual opinion of the writer, but in the newspapers of the period, which, read by all, formed and reflected the general feeling. Such as have the time or courage to search the dusty and ponderous files in the libraries where these ephemeral sheets are still preserved, will find, burning in their long-forgotten records, like the inextinguishable lamps in the tombs of

antiquity, the fire of those emotions of which Sir Walter Raleigh so truly said :

“ Tell love it comes unbidden,
Tell faith 'tis of the heart,
Tell loyalty, tho' chidden,
It never shall depart.
Men say that they shall die,
Then give the world the lie ! ”

III

Of the many factors in this marriage that appealed so powerfully to the popular imagination, the bride was the chief. Every incident connected with her movements was reported in the press. In Denmark her departure was regarded as an event of national importance. The whole country was *en fête*.

Frederick VII, who hated display, came to Copenhagen for the occasion. His wedding present was magnificent. The necklace he gave her contained 2,000 brilliants and 118 pearls, the two largest of which had been exhibited at the International Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, near the Koh-i-noor. From this splendid jewel depended a facsimile of the celebrated Dagmar Cross, in which was set a fragment reputed to belong to the True Cross with a piece of silk taken from the grave of King Canute. On the day of the wedding he gave a Court ball and feasted the poor all over the country.

After having taken leave of the King, the Princess drove to the railway station in an open carriage with her parents and eldest brother. Immense crowds thronged the streets, in the decoration of which great taste had been displayed. Escorted

by Hussars of the Guard, the carriage proceeded so slowly that it took an hour to traverse the route, which was comparatively short. At sight of her the enthusiasm of the populace knew no bounds. Flowers rained upon her from the windows as she passed. Her fair girlish loveliness excited universal admiration. The costume she had selected for the occasion suited her to perfection. It was "brown silk with white stripes, and one of those natty little bonnets which seemed to sit better on her head than on anybody else's."

Her spirits, sustained by excitement, were gay. There was no sadness of farewell to oppress them. Her parents and all her brothers and sisters were to accompany her to England. It seemed to her as if she were the heroine in one of her beloved Hans Christian Andersen's fairy-tales that began "Once upon a time" and ended "lived happily ever afterwards."

At the railway station, bedecked with English and Danish flags, a guard of honour was drawn up, and all the ministers, high functionaries, and *élite* of Copenhagen were assembled. Before entering the train the Mayor presented her with a farewell address, for which her father returned thanks. She received so many of these before she reached London that they became a source of merriment.

"I found her pounding Prince Willy's head with the address of the Mayor and Corporation of Margate," wrote one who travelled in her suite. "They all were very jolly and merry together."

Everywhere throughout her journey she was greeted with enthusiasm. The peasants flocked for miles around to get a glimpse of her at all the

stations at which her train stopped. At Roskilde the Militia turned out to welcome her, and at Ringsted a regiment of Dragoons was paraded. At Korsør, where she embarked for Kiel, there was a grand display of fireworks.

The boat in which she crossed was called the *Schleswig*, and, in keeping with its name, a slight derangement in the machinery caused some delay. At Kiel her uncle, the Duke of Glucksburg, gave a banquet in her honour. The Castle was crowded with young ladies all up the staircase.

Even in Germany, where opinion was strongly opposed to the marriage, she was treated with great honour. The road between Altona and Hamburg, along which she drove at night, was brilliantly illuminated, as were also the Docks in the latter city. In Hanover, where she passed a night, the King entertained her sumptuously. At Cologne the desire to see her was so great that the train was delayed to allow her to drive through the streets. A woman in the crowd, as she passed, made her laugh by exclaiming, "Oh, what a dear little thing!"

In Brussels she stayed some days to recover from her journey and to prepare for the still greater excitement to come. But she obtained little rest. It was here that she had been betrothed, here that her wedding dress, the gift of King Leopold, was made. At Court there were magnificent fêtes in her honour. In public she had but to appear to receive an ovation. At the last moment the hour of her departure was secretly altered in order to save her the fatigue of further excitement.

On the night of the 6th of March the Princess

Alexandra arrived at Margate. The wonderful experiences through which she had passed since setting out from Copenhagen eight days before were as nothing compared with what awaited her now. It was not so much in the superiority of the ovation she received as in its character that the difference lay. The demonstrations of which she had previously been the object were in reality homage paid to the might and majesty of England rather than to herself. Of a certainty, had she been destined to be the bride of the heir to any other throne in Europe, her progress would have been far less conspicuous. Hitherto she had been merely a symbol of British greatness, a factor in its immense prestige. Henceforth it was to be for herself alone that she was to be honoured. The distinction was subtle, but from the manner in which she comported herself it was evident that she appreciated it.

She was assured in the press that she was not only taken to the home of England's future King, but also to the hearts of the whole English people; that this love of the people was no small part of her happiness—"a part purchased for her by the exemplary virtues of the Royal Family"; that the crowds of eager faces, the spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm, the magnificent demonstrations and universal greetings, meant solemnly one and the same thing—that the English people took her to their heart.

She was, moreover, reminded that she had come to fill a lofty station—so lofty, indeed, that it could receive but one additional lustre—that of virtue; that she had not to concern herself about the

royalty so much as the duty of her station. Nature had blest her with beauty, health, and stately presence. Education had taught her the use of these in their relation to high position. And all that her new station asked of her was to be good in it.

The Danes, however, placed a quite different interpretation on her reception. While expressing the great satisfaction felt in Denmark at the manner in which the Princess had been received in England, a leading Danish paper said significantly: "It is very desirable that England should have an opportunity of knowing more of Danish affairs than is generally supposed to be the case. It would not be pleasant, or becoming, however, on the present occasion to say anything whatever of the dispute between the Duchies and Denmark, for which other and more fitting opportunities may offer."

IV

In the previous autumn Princess Alexandra and her father had been the guests of Queen Victoria for three weeks at Windsor and Osborne. The Prince of Wales at that time was, by special desire of the Queen, abroad, and the visit of the Princess was of so private a nature that her arrival now had all the novelty, both to herself and England, of a first acquaintance.

A determination to honour the bride of the Prince of Wales was the sentiment of the hour. It not only pervaded all classes, but was, perhaps, felt and expressed most strongly by those who, in social position, were furthestmost removed from the Throne—the great mass of the people.

A single idea possessed all minds, a single topic was on all lips. No other subject seemed able to win for itself so much as five minutes' attention. Nobody could remember anything like it. In the popular eagerness to welcome the bride every vestige of antagonism between the Crown and the people had vanished.

If the Princess's reception was "the most remarkable accorded to royalty in modern times," as a spectacle it was a sorry affair. The decorations were tawdry and devoid of taste. With no precedent to serve as a guide, there was no organisation. The Home Office, which was supposed to be responsible for all the details, was in conflict with the municipalities through which the procession was to pass, and they in their turn with one another. The Mayor and Corporation of London insisted on having a Civic Procession of their own to meet and conduct the Princess through the City, which, by its mismanagement, nearly brought disaster to the whole royal progress. The police were insufficient to control the enormous crowds, and no troops lined the route. To add to the confusion, no definite hour having been fixed for the procession to start, nobody knew when it would appear at a selected point. The weather, too, was most unpropitious; rain and snow fell at intervals throughout the day.

Yet, in spite of all these drawbacks, the enthusiasm of the people was unabated. The day previous it seemed as if London, unable any longer to contain itself, had come out into the streets to anticipate the pleasure of the morrow. The City was all but impassable. Early in the afternoon

a cab was an hour and three-quarters going from Farringdon Street to London Bridge. A gentleman who was in it declared that he saw but one policeman between these points. From which some idea of the confusion and excitement on the great day itself may be gathered.

On Saturday morning, the 7th of March, when the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert*, with the Princess on board, arrived at Gravesend, the very river was filled with a seething mass of humanity. At sight of the Princess on the deck, surrounded by her family, a mighty shout rent the air. She was dressed entirely in white, with a white shawl draped loosely around her shoulders, and a little white bonnet on her head. In this virginal costume, with her fair hair parted in the middle, *à l'Impératrice Eugénie*, she appeared a mere girl. She was, in fact, barely nineteen.

Though warned beforehand what to expect, she was evidently astonished. With a frank display of wondering pleasure she advanced to the star-board taffrail, and, looking from side to side, bowed her acknowledgments, every now and then speaking earnestly to her mother, who stood near. Occasionally, as the cheering on the port-side grew deafening, she went to that side also. But this did not stop the cheers. Nothing did. Even when she had gone below, her white bonnet and delighted face, peeping from some unexpected window, was instantly discovered and acclaimed. She did not, nor could not, doubt the sincerity of her greeting.

The Prince of Wales, who arrived at noon, received a delirious welcome.

Whatever anxiety—and it was great—that those in charge of the royal progress might feel as to the success of their imperfect arrangements, it was evident that the good temper of the vast multitude could be relied on.

At Gravesend, as the Princess advanced along the pier, sixty young girls of Kent, dressed in the red and white colours of Denmark, strewed flowers beneath her feet. An earl drove the royal train. It proceeded slowly through dense masses of people, so that all might see the bride, to the Bricklayers' Arms Station in the Old Kent Road. From this point the procession started at half-past one. It consisted of six carriages and an escort of Life Guards. The first five carriages contained the suite and the Princess's young brothers and sisters. She, with the Prince at her side and her parents opposite, rode in the sixth.

The captivating white dress she had worn in the morning had been changed for a "mauve-coloured silk, with a richly embroidered violet velvet mantle bordered with sable, and a white silk bonnet trimmed with blush roses and rosebuds."

Those who objected to crinolines observed with pleasure "that the skirt was of very moderate expanse, and hoped that the hint, given at the very fountain-head of fashion, would not be lost on the foolish girls who are daily risking their own and others' lives by wearing draperies of the most absurd dimensions."

As the procession went down the Old Kent Road snow began to fall. But the elements, which behaved in the most capricious way, failed to damp the ardour of the multitude that day,

and "the smile of the Princess was more enchanting than ever."

The first hitch occurred on London Bridge. Here the procession was detained nearly half an hour, while a bleak wind blew down the river, with gusts of snow and rain. The reason of this unconscionable delay was due to the difficulty experienced by the Lord Mayor and Corporation, who had lingered too long over lunch at the Guildhall, in proceeding through the dense crowds to welcome the royal couple. The Lord Mayor alone was able to reach them. The coaches of the Corporation remained stuck fast in the crowd, which, finding them an impediment to its comfort, forced them into the obscurity of the side streets. In the meantime the anxiety and inconvenience of the Prince and Princess may be imagined. It was impossible to prevent the people from pressing round their carriage. One man actually mounted behind the Prince of Wales to avoid being crushed.

In the end, owing to the inefficiency of the police, it was necessary to send for a squad of cavalry to clear a way for the royal carriage with drawn sabres. But, though a way was cleared, what a way it was! From King William Street to the Mansion House was a battle-ground, strewn with hats, caps, bonnets, shoes, crinolines, and the fragments of almost every variety of human attire, male and female, torn from their wearers in the fearful crush. But for the good temper that prevailed there must have been a serious loss of life. As it was, many were injured, and some past recovery.

On arriving at the Mansion House the royal

carriage, which had proceeded with the greatest difficulty, was separated from the others and hemmed in completely. For a time it seemed as if the spectacle, from which all semblance of order had vanished, would end in some terrible catastrophe. "Above the cheering the shrieks of women were painfully audible, and boys, in a pitiable state of terror, were seen waging a struggle for life." The Princess herself, with her own hands, was seen to rescue the head of a youth which had got entangled in the wheels. An attempt was even made by some to unharness the horses and draw the carriage.

The calmness of the young Princess in all this agitation was marvellous, and it was in no small degree due to her enchanting smile that the temper of the tortured mass remained amiable. Only once, when one of her escort, whose horse fell with the rider in the saddle, was nearly killed before her eyes, did she spring from her seat in alarm; but, on being assured of his safety, she quickly regained her apparent composure.

Though the streets in the West End were broader than the old narrow lanes of the City, the crowds that thronged them were as great. It was estimated that there were 30,000 people at least in St. James's Street. Many who had paid large sums for windows were unable to get to them, while others arrived to find their places already occupied. The tedium of waiting, reports of a disaster in the City, and the general absence of police control, only added to the confusion. Even at so open a space as Hyde Park Corner the press was terrific. "At one time," reported an observer,

“ a baby was held up which had all the appearance of being dead. At another, a woman was seen to throw an infant into a passing vehicle to save its life, and was then swept into the vortex herself.”

Moving slowly through the midst of such scenes, the royal carriage finally reached Paddington at 5.30. It had been over four hours in coming from the Bricklayers' Arms! Throughout the day it had snowed and rained at intervals, now it began to rain steadily. This, however, did not deter the crowds that were waiting to cheer the Princess on her way to Windsor. Even the poor inmates of Hanwell Lunatic Asylum, drawn up in the grounds skirted by the railway, brandished flags and shouted “ Welcome ! ”

As there was no direct line to Windsor in those days, the royal party were obliged to leave the train at Slough. Owing to the inclemency of the weather, the remainder of the journey was finished in closed carriages, to the great disappointment of the multitudes that still lined the road. At the foot of the Castle the ringing cheers of the Eton boys relieved the anxiety of the Queen, who had been waiting at a window for over an hour.

It was nearly seven when the weary and be-draggled Princess, as the *Times* informed its sympathetic readers, “ found ample solace for all the toil and excitement of the day in the arms of the royal lady, who before another sun has rolled over us will be her loving mother.”

Such was the introduction of the Princess Alexandra to the people of England. It was one of the most remarkable events of its kind in history, unequalled even by the demonstrations

which greeted Marie Antoinette when she entered Paris as a bride, and fortunately without the shocking catastrophe which attended that event. Since the French Revolution royalty had never received such homage from democracy. The welcome was, in the highest degree, a popular demonstration. In this lay its true significance.

The spectacle was measured by miles and the spectators by millions. For seats, the money would have purchased a decent principality or settled the debt of such a kingdom as Greece. And all this to view six plain carriages driving from one railway station to another without the least pretence at pomp or royal display. Well might she ponder how she passed without so much as the Continental line of *gens d'armes* along the living line of English faces.

There is something sublime in the strength and intensity of such enthusiasm. It not only drew the people nearer to the Throne, but at the same time to one another. The subjects of an Empire on which the sun never sets can seldom experience in all its interest that sense of sympathy and mutual reliance which ennobled the cities of antiquity. It is well for a people when such emotions can be experienced generally and without reserve, and it is not the least advantage of monarchy that it is able to rally around it this sentiment in time of peace, and when it would otherwise be dormant. It is chiefly because it contributed to this in so high a degree that the marriage of the Prince of Wales has far more than an ephemeral interest, and is a memorable event in the history of England.

V

After the event of the 7th of March the wedding on the 10th was almost in the nature of an anti-climax. The great welcome of the people might be described as the civil marriage, the wedding at Windsor being the religious ceremony. The former was witnessed by millions, the latter by a select and chosen few. Among them were to be seen Palmerston, Gladstone, Disraeli, and their wives, as well as Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, Kingsley, and Stanley.

Of the royal guests, the most conspicuous was the Crown Princess of Prussia. As she advanced to her place a fine little boy, all unmoved by the pomp around him, dragged on his mother's arm as he looked behind him and was with difficulty brought to his little feet to surmount the three steps of the *haut pas*. This child, dressed in Highland costume, was destined to become, many years later, Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Queen Victoria had expressed the desire that the Prince of Wales should be married with the "utmost magnificence." With this end in view no more suitable place could have been chosen than St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The sheer beauty of this Gothic gem, sanctified by the immemorial memories of the glorious past, cast a romantic and picturesque glamour over the splendid scene staged within its walls.

It was such a picture as an artist of the Renaissance might have conceived. In this spectacle Queen Victoria, who gazed down upon it from a quaint pew in the wall above the chancel

on a level with the organ, was the most striking feature. Clad in black to her gloves, her sombre attire relieved only by the blue ribbon and star of the Garter, grief and care were stamped on every line of her face. Seen thus, she lent a curious pathos to the gorgeous scene. It drew tears from the eyes of Lord Palmerston, a statesman, one would think, proof against such appeals to the senses. She attracted every eye, and all in the stately assembly bowed low and curtsied to her before taking their places.

Till the arrival of the bride, however, the bridegroom was the centre of attraction. As he waited her coming, a solitary and resplendent figure in his Garter robes on the blue-carpeted *haut pas* in front of the choir, he looked the beau-ideal of a prince.

"It is a wonder," was the ecstatic opinion of one of the newspaper reporters, "the people did not leap up at him, or cast their garments upon him, as the Athenians of old did to their favourites."

The pleasure experienced by all in beholding him was deepened by the expectancy with which his beautiful bride was awaited. There was a buzz of admiration as the lovely vision appeared.

Her bridal dress, the gift of Leopold I, was a wonderful creation. The veil was fastened by a diadem of diamonds designed to represent the three plumes of the Prince of Wales, whose wedding present it was. Beneath it a long pendent curl fell on her neck, around which she wore Frederick VII's magnificent diamond and pearl necklace. Queen Victoria's gift, a superb bracelet of opals and diamonds, encircled her left arm,

while her bouquet of orange-flowers was the present of the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh.

It was a truly princely gift. The "bouquet holder" was a *chef d'œuvre* of the jeweller's art. The upper part receiving the flowers was carved out of rock-crystal, and had taken the lapidary some months to execute. It was trumpet-shaped, the crystals being inlaid with large emeralds and diamonds, relieved with pink coral and oriental pearls. The shaft contained four feather-like plumes composed of brilliants, and under each the letter "A" in rubies. A crystal ball set with rubies terminated the shaft or handle. Around the centre was a ring, arranged as the Princess's coronet, and to which was attached a chain of large pearls and gold, with a hoop of pearls to wear on the finger. As a delicate allusion to the donor, a small Star of India in diamonds was introduced in the ornamentation.

An extreme pallor, accentuated by the whiteness of her bridal dress, gave her beauty an indefinable air of caste. She looked the personification of Pedigree. Every lineament of her flower-like features, every movement of her graceful form, bore the unmistakable impress of royal lineage.

"Her face," said Dickens, "was very pale and full of a sort of awe and wonder. It was the face of no ordinary bride, not simply a timid, shrinking girl, but one with a distinctive character of her own, prepared to act a part greatly."

Glittering with jewels and enveloped in voluminous folds of dazzling whiteness trailing behind her like foam, she seemed to float rather than walk up the Gothic nave.

“There was no one present,” added Dickens, “who did not feel the effect of that slowness of progress which carried the bride so gradually and with such almost imperceptible movement past them.”

Thackeray declared that, as he watched her advancing thus, followed by her eight bridesmaids similarly attired, he was reminded of the princesses in the fairy-tale who had been changed into swans.

Suddenly, in the midst of this almost enchanted scene, a human chord was struck. Queen Victoria was seen to withdraw into the interior of her lofty pew, weeping bitterly. At the sound of Jenny Lind’s glorious voice chanting the Chorale to the solemn, sorrowful music of the Prince Consort, which had been specially chosen for the occasion, she had been reminded of that terrible day fifteen months before, when, on the very spot on which the bridal couple now stood, she had gazed distracted upon the coffin of her beloved husband. “The sight of her grief cast a momentary awe over the ceremony, which rendered the emotions of those present almost sublime.”

The popular excitement continued for some days. On proceeding to Osborne in the Isle of Wight, where the honeymoon was spent, the royal pair received an ovation all along the route. The platforms of the railway stations through which they passed were choked with people. At Basingstoke alone upwards of 4,000 persons were admitted. In London, on the night of the wedding, the theatres were free to as many as they could contain, and all traffic was suspended

CHAPTER IV

THE CHARM OF THE QUEEN

I. DEMEANOUR OF THE PRINCESS ON HER ENTRY INTO LONDON—THE GENERAL IMPRESSION—IRRESISTIBLE APPEAL OF HER PERSONALITY—ALEXANDRA *SIMPATICA*. II. EARLY PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PRINCESS—THEIR LACK OF RESEMBLANCE—THE ELUSIVE QUALITY OF HER CHARM—THE OPINIONS OF CELEBRATED PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS—BENJAMIN CONSTANT'S PORTRAIT—PEERLESS BEAUTY OF THE PRINCESS—A WOMAN'S IMPRESSION. III. DEEPLY RELIGIOUS NATURE OF THE PRINCESS—HER TOLERANCE AND CHEERFULNESS—HER ADMIRATION OF GLADSTONE—HER SYMPATHY FOR MRS. GLADSTONE ON HIS DEATH—HER IMPULSIVENESS—HOW IT APPEALED TO THE PUBLIC—DEATH OF CECIL RHODES—INFLAMED STATE OF PUBLIC OPINION—THE QUEEN'S TRIBUTE—ITS DIGNITY—THE MARATHON RACE—INTEREST IT AROUSED—ITS DRAMATIC FINISH—POPULAR SYMPATHY FOR THE LOSER—IMPULSIVE CONDUCT OF THE QUEEN—THE EXTRAORDINARY ENTHUSIASM IT EXCITED—THE SECRET OF HER LIFE-LONG APPEAL TO THE MASSES.

I

AND what of the Princess in this world all in gala? How did she play her part in the ecstatic opera?

To this question there was and could be but one answer. All agreed that she could not have borne herself better if her whole life had been a preparation for this great occasion.

This is no light praise. Such an experience demands moral qualities of a high order, and an uncommon degree of nerve and endurance. Seldom has anyone of her age and sex been exposed to the gaze of so many beings under such conditions. It is only by some great effort of the will that it is possible to preserve self-control under so severe a strain.

Public expectation had been raised to a peril-

ous pitch. A breath, a murmur, and the whole edifice of hope would have collapsed like a house of cards. Hitherto known only by repute, the Princess was called upon to justify, not only by her looks but by her manner, the enthusiasm she had aroused. Yet never was a welcome more richly deserved. It was not so much her beauty, which made it impossible for any in the crowds that greeted her to resist the overmastering impulse to cheer her, as the innate goodness, the genuine kindness of heart that were revealed in her every look and gesture.

Those who caught ever so transiently the expression of that bright, serious, girlish face were not likely to forget it. "They saw queenly dignity blended with almost childish grace, exquisite purity, and depth and naturalness of feeling."

Reflecting on the extraordinary admiration this simply-bred girl evoked, one involuntarily thinks of her mother. Was it not she who had formed the character whose "exquisite purity" was so apparent to all, who had given that "depth and naturalness of feeling" its goodness? Was not her daughter's noble destiny a proof that the principles she had inculcated with such care had borne fruit, that her conception of duty was justified?

But if the warmth of the Princess Alexandra's welcome can be traced to the influence of her mother's character on her own, it was a subtler power that changed the admiration of the day into the popularity of a life-time. This power emanated from within the Princess herself. It

was the dominant element of her personality, the solvent in which every other was blended. The charm she exercised everybody felt, women as well as men.

"I have known many women," wrote the Crown Princess several years later, "who pleased all men without exception, but none like Alexandra, who won the approval of her own sex without exciting jealousy."

For personalities such as hers the Italians have a word—*simpatica*. Alexandra *Simpatica*! The phrase explains the secret of her irresistible appeal more completely and vividly than any amount of description could do.

II

Of the many photographs of the Queen that the public have been permitted to purchase, the first appeared immediately after her marriage. The enterprising photographer advertised them as follows :

"A SERIES OF PORTRAITS PHOTOGRAPHED FROM LIFE

"They represent the Prince and Princess of Wales in many attitudes, and will enable those who peruse them carefully to become almost as familiar with their personal appearance as if they had lived with them from infancy.

"In one of these pictures the Princess stands in the favourite position of portrait painters, with her hands clasped in front and her head slightly inclined towards the right. In another she sits

writing at an *escritoire*. In a third she stoops over a book she is reading with a look of close and thoughtful attention. In another, the most beautiful of all, she looks up from a photographic album to join in animated conversation with someone seated opposite, but not appearing in the picture.

“The artist has been eminently happy in representing the beauty of the Princess, as well as the animation and the thoughtfulness which at times seem to characterise her countenance.”

Poor Princess !

The wording of this advertisement, so typical of the stiff formality of Mid-Victorian days, will doubtless cause those to smile who read it now.

Such as may have chanced to preserve copies of these very conventional photographs will have no need to look at them to realise their utter lifelessness. No doubt, considering the undeveloped state of photographic art at the time, they have a certain resemblance to the original, but that art was certainly not one capable of reproducing an expression so mobile and elusive as that of the Princess. She was too beautiful not to make a beautiful picture, but even in later years the best photographs fail to do her justice. At the most they are merely beautiful masks that conceal the personality of the woman. In front of the camera the extreme mobility of her expression became rigid and unnatural.

The attempts of the “moving pictures” have been equally unsuccessful. But in this case it has not been the fault of the cinema so much as of the cinema photographers, who, to her annoy-

ance, seemed to stand too much in awe of her to indicate how and when they wished to "snap" her.

This elusive quality was, too, the despair of painters and sculptors alike. In her youth it was most noticeable in her eyes, whose soft blue depths had at times an indefinable expression of gentleness. Her smile was especially baffling. No artist could ever quite succeed in reproducing its peculiar fascination.

She was too restless to be a good model.

"I soon discovered," wrote Frith, "that the illustrious young lady did not know that the keeping of her face in one position, for a few minutes only, was necessary to enable an artist to catch a resemblance of it. I did not dare to complain till after two or three attempts."

But complaint availed him little, and in the end he was obliged to paint from a photograph, and only asked for sittings of a few minutes. On receiving his commission he had counted on producing a masterpiece. He succeeded only in painting a lifeless image in which his art was displayed in arrangement and colour.

Gibson, one of the greatest sculptors of his time, was equally unfortunate.

"I saw at once," he confessed to Frith, "what a pretty subject she was for a bust. I modelled it in fourteen days. The Princess sat eight times—an hour each sitting. She is a delightful lady, always good-natured and full of good sense, but she can't sit a bit."

Many years later, when she had learned to sit, Benjamin Constant, the famous French artist, painted her. His portrait was one of the most

successful. The following was his impression of her :

“ Rather tall, slender, and *élégante*, never princess has had such a charm as Alexandra. Her features have preserved their youth and mobility. Her eyes are a deep, pure blue, their expression is almost timid, and her face radiates kindness and sympathy.

“ She was always late at her sittings, and the manner in which she excused herself made me feel that it was I who should apologise for taking up her time. She spoke with so much courtesy and naturalness, so gently, and in such perfect French that I said to myself, ‘ Our Queens of France in the old days must have spoken so.’ She was quiet, and granted all the sittings necessary with much grace. Miss Charlotte Knollys, a lady of rare intelligence, who accompanied her, would speak occasionally to my model and the painter, and the time passed quickly, too quickly, whilst the Princess’s Japanese dog snorted on his cushion.”

That exquisite grace of manner, which the French painter likened to the *bel air* of an old-world queen, made a deep impression on the imagination. It was said of her, as was said of Marie Antoinette, that it seemed as natural to offer her a throne as any other woman a chair. In her case, however, this queenly dignity was entirely free from any suggestion of pride. With Alexandra, kind hearts were more than coronets.

Queens of Society, celebrated beauties from all nations, assembled at Sandringham from time to time ; yet there was an indescribable something about her which threw them all into the shade.

“ I have heard even the men declare that every

woman looks frightful in the room with the Princess of Wales," wrote a woman in the hey-day of the Queen's beauty. "The only women I remember who in any way resembled her were Lady Spencer ('Spenser's Faerie Queene'), Lady Blandford, Lady Dudley, and perhaps one or two others. The professionals were quite out of the running, notwithstanding their undeniable beauty and siren graces. They lacked the refinement and unconsciousness of the gentlewoman."

Another remarkable thing about the Princess was that, whilst most women look better in one dress than another, she looked well in everything. "You see her in full dress with rows of pearls, and those magnificent diamonds which, of all adornments, are the most difficult to wear in profusion without exceeding the limits of good taste and not look smothered in them, and you think that decidedly evening dress sets her off to the best advantage. You see her in the morning and find that you have made a mistake, and like her better in that quiet serge dress and her favourite Danish cross. Yes, most certainly she ought to be seen in the morning. Then, in a bonnet, was there ever anyone like the Princess? And so on, through all the changes. In her sailor's hat, or riding habit, or rough ulster and cap, driving the miniature four-in-hand of ponies that might have been Cinderella's in her fairy days, with the silvery bells and dogs barking round her, she is peerless. You finally give up all comparisons and discover what England found out long ago, that the fairest of daughters is Alexandra of Denmark, Princess of Wales."

III

As a result of her early training she was deeply religious. It was this quality to which she owed her air of purity, and which rendered it impossible for scandal ever to busy itself with her name. Her faith in the Christian religion was simple and unquestioning. She invariably resorted to it for consolation in her afflictions and when seeking to relieve the distress of others. Like her husband, she seldom failed to attend church on Sundays. Mrs. Gladstone, who knew her well, said that when at Sandringham "she always chose the hymns."

A nature so sympathetic could not be other than tolerant. Her religion was eminently cheerful and charitable. She believed in the saving grace of a kind action, and regarded the quality of mercy as the chief attribute of justice. Gratitude, which is not usually associated with royalty, was pronounced in her.

No one, save the Prince of Wales, realised more fully or acknowledged more frankly what the monarchy owed to Gladstone, whose immense influence had been invaluable to the Throne on more than one trying occasion. The Princess always defended him loyally when she heard him belittled. On his death she wrote the following beautiful letter of sympathy to Mrs. Gladstone, which Mrs. Drew has recently made public for the first time in her 'Life' of her mother :

SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK,
Whit Sunday, May 29th, 1898.

"DEAREST MRS. GLADSTONE,

"I have waited until now, when your beloved husband has been laid in his last resting-

place, before daring to intrude on the sacredness of your sorrow, which I fear surpasses all that words can express. My telegram, however, will have told you how my thoughts and prayers have been constantly with and for you ever since the terrible news of his fatal illness first reached me. We are thankful to think that, after all his sufferings, his last few days were peaceful and painless, and that his longing and wish to go to his 'heavenly home' were granted him on the very day of Our Saviour's Ascension.

"It must be some consolation to you also to feel how the whole nation mourns with you and yours the loss of that great and good man whose name will go down in letters of gold to posterity as one of the most beautiful, upright, and disinterested characters that has ever adorned the pages of history. We all individually grieve the loss of a great personal friend, from whom we have received innumerable kindnesses which we shall never forget. How my whole heart went out to you during Saturday's terrible ordeal, when I saw you kneeling by the side of the dear remains of him whom you loved best on earth, 'the People's William,' and your all.

"I do hope your health has not suffered, and that the cross our dear Lord has laid upon you is not more than you can bear, and that for your dear children's sake you will take the greatest care of yourself. I was so deeply touched by your kind lines when you thought there was a ray of hope left, and you may be sure our visit to you and your beloved husband only one little year ago, in your own beautiful home, Hawarden,

will ever remain as one of our most precious and valued memories.

“With deepest sympathy with you and your children,

“Yours very affectionately,

“ALEXANDRA.”

This beautiful expression of sympathy reflects, as in a mirror, the emotional nature of the Queen.

The impulsiveness which is generally characteristic of such natures is too often a source of unhappiness. In royalty, the least of whose actions is subjected to the closest scrutiny, this quality is apt to prove highly dangerous to the possessor. Most of the tragedies of royal lives can be traced to it. Marie Antoinette is a notable example. From the outset of her career to its close she was the victim of impulse. Her impulsive actions and words are the milestones on her road to the guillotine. At the very start, the quite innocent impulse that prompted her, out of a spirit of sheer *joie de vivre*, to laugh at the stupid, outworn etiquette of the Court injured her. Even those who applauded and encouraged her under the influence of her fascinating spell could not fail to perceive, on reflection, that to ridicule etiquette was to make those whose prerogatives depended on it appear ridiculous. From resentment to calumny is but a step. Conscious of her own rectitude, the impulsive Queen never stopped, in her pursuit of pleasure, to consider how scandal might interpret her conduct. For her, placed as she was, even her friendships were indiscretions. Jealousy and detraction circled around them like

birds of prey ready to tear her reputation to pieces. How fatal was the indignation that urged her to induce the King to order the arrest of Cardinal de Rohan in the presence of the whole Court! After the fall of the Bastille her impulsiveness, as if it were her evil genius, having previously discredited her, prompted her to commit one political blunder after another till, taught by the bitterest experience to mistrust it, she was no longer able to employ it when she might perhaps have done so with profit. Beginning by making her misunderstood, this fatal quality ended by making her hated. It implies a spirit of rebellion, and there is always something of an autocrat in a rebel.

It was to this trait that the highly gifted Empress Frederick, as previously stated, chiefly owed her unhappiness. Very few, like Queen Victoria, who realised its disadvantages, have had a will sufficiently powerful to control it.

The impulsiveness of Queen Alexandra is an instance where the exception proves the rule. In her it was actually a safeguard to popularity. The explanation is simple. In royalty to act on impulse is always injurious when the motives that prompt one to do so, are, as so often happens, personal and selfish. In the case of Queen Alexandra her impulsive actions were characterised by a complete absence of any consideration of self. She had, too, a curious intuitive *flair* for the psychological moment.

Her conduct on the death of Cecil Rhodes and at the Marathon Race are typical examples of this.

The death of Cecil Rhodes, occurring at a time when the antagonisms he had kindled were of the bitterest, had the effect of a political challenge. The spirit of faction, ever alert in democracy, inflamed by the indecent and futile wrangling of his friends and foes, created one of those party quarrels in which all sense of self-respect is temporarily lost—always a dangerous political mood. From the fury of such storms it is the prudent custom of royalty in England to seek shelter under the generally accepted constitutional maxim that the Throne is outside party politics. Yet at this moment Queen Alexandra ventured into the arena, and, regardless of consequences, impulsively ordered a wreath to be placed on the bier of the dead man.

It was the sole tribute he received from royalty. Had there been others the effect would, perhaps, have been to inflame popular passion still more. Alone, the Queen's wreath was a sort of *chapeau bas*! to Death, a mute and timely reminder of a power greater than man. As a gesture it was purely impersonal, a sort of impulsive *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*. And the public recognised the justice of the reproof.

Equally characteristic and effective is the Marathon Race episode.

This event, the most popular and spectacular of all in the list of the Olympian Games held in London in July 1908, had aroused world-wide interest. As its name implies, it was a test of endurance. The distance covered by the runners, from the start at Windsor to the finish in the Stadium in London, was the same as that

traversed by the soldier who ran without stopping from Marathon to Athens with the news of the immortal victory. Along the whole twenty-six miles of the route an immense number of people assembled to watch the competitors pass. The vast Stadium itself was packed to its utmost capacity, and upwards of 20,000 persons were turned away. The Queen occupied the royal box opposite the finish. No better idea of the intense interest that prevailed in the Stadium can be given than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's vivid description of the scene.

After expatiating on the splendid appearance and all-round excellence of the athletes in the previous games, he wrote :

“ We were waiting, 80,000 of us, for the man to appear—waiting anxiously. Through yonder arch he must come. Every eye in the great curved bank of humanity is fixed upon the gap. He must be very near now, speeding down the street between the lines of shouting people. And then, at last, he comes. But how different from the exultant victor we expected ! Out of the dark arch-way there staggered a little man with red running-drawers, a tiny, boy-like creature. He reeled as he entered and faced the roar of applause, then feebly turned to the left and wearily trotted down the track. Friends and encouragers were pressing round him. Suddenly the whole group stopped. There were wild gesticulations. Good heavens, he has fainted ! Is it possible, even at this last moment, the prize may slip through his fingers ? Every eye slides round to that dark arch-way. No second man has yet appeared.

Then a great sigh of relief goes up. I do not think, in all that great assembly, anyone would have wished victory to be torn at the last instant from this plucky little Italian.

"Thank God, he is on his feet again, the little red legs going incoherently, but drumming hard, driven by a superior will. There is a groan as he falls once more and a cheer as he staggers again to his feet. It is horrible, yet fascinating, this struggle between a set purpose and an utterly exhausted frame. Then again he collapsed, kind hands saving him from a heavy fall. Surely he is done now? He cannot rise again.

"From under the arch-way has entered the second runner. Stars and Stripes on his breast, going gallantly, well within his strength. There is only twenty yards to do, if the Italian can do it. He staggers up, no trace of intelligence on his face. Will he fall again? No, he sways, he balances, then is through the rope into a score of friendly arms. He has gone the extreme of human endurance. No Roman of the prime ever bore himself better. The great breed is not yet extinct.

"After this all is anticlimax."

In the excitement of the moment the Italian flag was hoisted as a sign that the Italian had won. The fact, however, that he had received assistance from his too-sympathetic friends made it impossible for the judges to proclaim him the victor. The Italian flag was accordingly lowered, and the Stars and Stripes took its place.

"I confess," added Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "I do not see how the judges could have come to

any other decision. It was, as matters stood, a fair and square win for the American, since, without help, Dorando must have lain senseless on the track. And yet the tragedy remains."

Such, indeed, the vast majority of the spectators regarded it. On all sides the final verdict was received with surprise and indignation. The very name of the race seemed to protest. As a test of endurance it demanded not only physical but moral qualities of the highest order. The runner from Marathon had dropped dead on reaching Athens; he had just strength enough left, before expiring, to announce the great victory. It was the *spirit* that sustained him, not the actual *running* from the field of battle, that had made the incident for ever memorable. In other words, to justify its name, a so-called "Marathon Race" in so-called "Olympic Games," to be won, should be lost heroically.

This was powerfully felt by all in the Stadium who witnessed the closing scenes of the race. Dorando, though he had lost, was regarded as the practical winner. Queen Alexandra, who had displayed the liveliest interest, was observed, when the Italian flag was run up, "to beat a tattoo on the floor of the stand unrestrainedly with her umbrella." The general admiration felt for Dorando was testified in many impulsive ways. As he left the Stadium a woman in the fashionable crowd was seen to unclasp a bracelet from her arm and fasten it upon his wrist, while a working man thrust a shilling into his hand.

The impulse of the Queen was the most striking of all. She declared her intention of presenting

him with a cup in lieu of the one he had technically failed to win. On the day when the medals and trophies were distributed she presented it to him with her own hands. It bore the inscription :

FOR PIETRO DORANDO
IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE MARATHON RACE
FROM WINDSOR TO THE STADIUM
FROM QUEEN ALEXANDRA

The imagination of the general public was deeply impressed by this graceful and sympathetic act. As a gesture of royalty its effect was electric. Throughout Italy the news was received with enthusiasm. In France the *Matin* declared that "the cup awarded to Dorando by the Queen is not only a consolation—it is a more glorious reward than the first prize itself." In England, where her character was so well known, it was taken more quietly, but none the less proudly. People said, "It was to be expected of her."

Even in America, where, in the heat of international rivalry, it was felt that the American competitors had been treated unfairly in other contests, the act was not resented. The *New York Tribune* declared that "Queen Alexandra's thoughtfulness was a matter of general satisfaction." While the American Ambassador in Rome, in the name of the American Olympic Committee, presented Dorando with a medal on which a Marathon figure was inscribed bearing the flags of the United States and Italy.

Dorando's own impression of the Queen's

impulsive act was recorded by the inevitable interviewer.

“When I was called to see Her Majesty,” he said, “I was trembling all over. I felt as if I should fall as I did on the day of the race. Then she spoke to me very kindly. ‘Bravo!’ was the only word I could understand, but I knew what she meant by her smile. I tried to thank her, in Italian, but I could not. I wept. This cup is balm to my soul. I shall treasure it to the end of my life.”

It was by innumerable such acts that Queen Alexandra became known to the nation. Though prevented by her lofty position and the complexities of modern life from coming into close contact with the people, as queens did in the olden time, her actions bridged the gulf that separated her from the masses and enabled her to mingle with them in spirit, as it were. The impression she produced on their simple and sentimental natures endured, because her generosity appealed to their hearts, where the appeal is always most powerful, rather than to their minds. The result was of incalculable value—not so much to herself, great though it was, as to the idea of royalty which she represented and popularised. And both the monarchy and the nation benefited.

CHAPTER V

DOMESTIC RELATIONS

I. BOURGEOIS CHARACTER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY—ITS EFFECT ON ROYALTY—DOMESTICITY OF ROYAL LIVES—IDYLLIC HAPPINESS OF QUEEN VICTORIA'S MARRIAGE—ITS APPEAL TO ENGLISH SENTIMENT—THE SECRET OF THE POPULAR INTEREST IN THE PRINCE OF WALES'S MARRIAGE. II. SERIOUS ILLNESS OF THE PRINCE—VAGUE UNEASINESS OF THE PUBLIC—DEVOTED CONDUCT OF THE PRINCESS—DEEP IMPRESSION IT PRODUCED—THE PRINCE IN DANGER—THE ALARM OF THE NATION—EXTRAORDINARY POPULAR MANIFESTATION OF LOYALTY TO THE THRONE—THE SUSPENSE INCREASES—THE FINAL CRISIS—THE PRINCE SLEEPS!—RELIEF OF THE NATION—THANK-OFFERING OF THE PRINCESS—THE NATIONAL THANKSGIVING—HOW THE PEOPLE TESTIFIED THEIR SYMPATHY WITH THE PRINCESS. III. PROFOUND IMPRESSION CREATED BY THIS EVENT—PRESS OPINIONS IN FRANCE—IN ENGLAND—ITS TRUE SIGNIFICANCE. IV. THE "REVERS DE MÉDAILLE" OF ROYAL SPLENDOUR—THE THRONE-LIGHT—ITS EFFECT ON ROYALTY—ROYALTY'S DESIRE FOR PRIVACY—WHY THE SINS OF ROYALTY ARE THE SINS OF DEMOCRACY—PUBLIC CENSURE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES—ITS HYPOCRISY—FOREIGN SYMPATHY—THE ELASTICITY OF THE PUBLIC CONSCIENCE—THE DIGNIFIED ATTITUDE OF THE PRINCESS OF WALES—THE PRINCE'S RESPECT AND AFFECTION FOR HIS WIFE. V. THE BIRTH OF THE DUKE OF CLARENCE—DEVOTION OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS TO THEIR CHILDREN—THE DUKE OF CLARENCE'S LOVE FOR HIS MOTHER—THE PATHOS OF HIS ILLNESS AND DEATH—PROSTRATION OF THE PRINCESS—WORLD-WIDE SYMPATHY FOR THE PRINCESS.

I

THE overthrow of Feudalism which shook Europe to its foundations had been accomplished by the middle classes. The proletarian Terror was merely one of many engines of destruction. It was discarded as soon as it had served the purpose for which it had been fashioned. The People was not the Demos of the masses, as the mob fondly imagined, but the *bourgeoisie*, which partially explains why royalty survived the cataclysm.

As usual after every struggle, the influence of the conqueror was felt everywhere. The nineteenth century was essentially a *bourgeois* age. Its two great ideals—home and respectability—up to which it endeavoured to live, were *bourgeois* both in their conception and expression. It accumulated wealth and spent it in true *bourgeois* fashion. It loved and sinned and worshipped God in the same way. It made religion a sort of moral police force to maintain law and order, and compelled criticism to act in a similar capacity towards morality and liberty. An army of "Philistines" was ever at hand to crush sedition. "To startle the *bourgeois*," as Baudelaire expressed it, was a crime equivalent to *lèse-majesté*. Nothing escaped the impress of the *bourgeois* seal. From the conscience of the proletariat to the manners of the aristocracy, the triumph of the *bourgeois* was visible everywhere.

Least of all did royalty, with "its capacity to adapt itself to time, place, and circumstance," fail to respond to this dominant influence. Precisely as it had formerly been *en-Versaillé*, as the father of Mirabeau pungently put it, so now it was *en-bourgeoisé*. Louis Philippe styled himself the "Citizen King," and lived like a *bon bourgeois*. Princess Christian's manner of life was by no means unique. Domesticity—a *bourgeois* virtue—was the rule rather than the exception of royal lives.

In the great drama in which, as was aptly said, "the French Revolution played Perseus to Royalty's Andromeda," the barriers that had

been erected between kings and their families were destroyed. In the dangers and humiliations through which both had passed they had discovered that their interests were identical. The muddied spring of human affection had been clarified. The desire for domesticity which had been awakened in the heart of royalty had all the force of a constitutional principle. In England, Queen Victoria's idyll established a precedent.

The marriage, which had been arranged for her by her uncle, Leopold I of Belgium, resulted in a union that realised the highest ideal of which matrimony is capable. She always regarded the period between her accession and her marriage as the "least sensible and satisfactory time in her whole life." Prince Albert came to England with his brother in the hope she would choose one or the other. Within four days she had conceived a deep and overpowering affection for him, which he returned, and, taking advantage of her royal station, the young Queen proposed and was accepted.

"It was a nervous thing to do," she told her aunt, the Duchess of Gloucester; "but it would have been impossible for him to propose to the Queen of England. He would never have presumed to take such a liberty."

The position of a Prince Consort is an embarrassing one. Prince Albert's German birth made his doubly so. To atone for the slights to which the public ungraciously and unreasonably subjected him, the Queen would have shared her throne with him had it been possible. She

Queen
Victoria
German

did nothing without his advice and sanction, and compelled all her ministers to consult him. If he left her, were it only for a few days, she counted the hours till his return. Once, when he fell through the ice skating at Windsor, she risked her life to save him. Alive, all her happiness was centred on him. Dead, his memory became a cult.

It was an age of exaggerated sentimentality. The revival of romanticism in literature, poetry, and art was world-wide. In the extravagant bliss and despair of Queen Victoria's life its emotional influence was paramount. Thus the picture of royal domesticity revealed by the throne-light satisfied every requisite of the prevailing sentimental and puritan conception of life.

The nation was accordingly greatly gratified by the promise of a second marriage so happy and prosperous as Queen Victoria's. The official announcement that the marriage of the Heir to the Throne was based entirely on mutual affection appealed powerfully to popular sentiment. The popular conception of "mutual affection" in the nineteenth century was that of a fairy-tale. The Prince of Wales was reported to have fallen in love with the photograph of the Princess before seeing the original. The report was readily believed, and the amiable fiction long served to explain the happy life of the royal pair.

The world at large naturally wonders how royal marriages come about, since, it is assumed, that where there are so little choice [and so few opportunities people can really know little of one another.

Royalty, no doubt, is as capable of a deep and enduring love as the humblest human being. Indeed it was the opinion of so experienced an authority as Madame de Genlis that "love in a palace, where it is surrounded with obstacles and beset with intrigues, burns with a far brighter flame than in a cottage or in solitude." But a royal love is a very different thing from a royal love-match. Queen Victoria's is a thing apart. Her passion for the Prince Consort will ever be remembered as one of the great loves of history.

In the case of the Prince of Wales and his bride, fiction paid homage to fact. Certainly without the "warm liking of the young people for one another," of which the Prince Consort wrote to Stockmar, their marriage could hardly have taken place. This, fortunately, was based on something more lasting and serious than a passion for a photograph.

No marriage was ever less a lottery. The greatest credit is due to the discernment of those who arranged it. The disposition and character of the bride were admirably fitted for the wear and tear of married life. As a wife she fulfilled all that the nation demanded of her and all that her husband desired. A model of fidelity and virtue, she was too indulgent to be exacting, and too discreet to make impossible demands. Her amiability could always be relied on, and her dignity saved her from humiliation. She was too sure of herself, too conscious of the significance and superiority of her position, and of her husband's appreciation of its importance, to doubt her ability to keep his regard.

Sickness and trouble are the true tests of devotion. Tried by these, it will be perceived that the bond that united Edward VII and Alexandra during the forty-seven years of their married life was no transient affection, no passing youthful fancy.

II

On the 22nd of November, 1871, it was reported in the Press that the Prince of Wales had been prevented from paying his proposed visit to the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh by a chill, resulting in a febrile attack which confined him to his room at Sandringham. This was the beginning of an illness which, by reason of the extraordinary effect it produced on the nation, has become historical.

On the 24th the public were informed that the Prince was suffering from typhoid fever. The disease was supposed to have been contracted during a visit the Prince and Princess had paid early in November to the Earl and Countess of Londesborough at Londesborough Lodge, Scarborough. Lord Chesterfield, one of the guests, and the Prince's servant, Blagge, were likewise similarly stricken.

At first the bulletins issued by the three doctors in attendance—Gull, Lowe, and Jenner—were favourable. The malady appeared to follow a normal course; the fever was high, but the patient's strength was well maintained. For several days the bulletins were the same. On the 27th it was reported that the royal children had been removed to Windsor to avoid the danger

of infection. This was regarded as so natural that it occasioned no comment. Nor did the news that Queen Victoria had gone to Sandringham to see her son appear at all alarming, since she returned the same day to Windsor, which she would not have done had his condition been grave. The public were also reassured by the announcement that he was being nursed by his wife and his sister, Princess Alice. The latter was known to be an experienced nurse, while the devotion of the Princess of Wales was regarded as fitting her for the part she had assumed.

The death of Lord Chesterfield on the 1st of December, and the simultaneous report that "Blagge was very low," apprised the public, for the first time, of the gravity of the Prince's condition. But the bulletins continued to be encouraging, and, as no sign of alarm was visible at either Sandringham or Windsor, the public apprehension was allayed. Nevertheless, an undercurrent of anxiety was perceptible in the Press, and the movements of the various members of the Royal Family were watched by the nation with a new and peculiar interest. All eyes were fixed on Windsor, as if it were some mystic shell, on the egress and ingress of the royal being within which the national welfare in some strange way depended. The figure of the lonely, grief-stricken Queen seemed suddenly to have acquired a significance hitherto unsuspected.

To a people like the English, with exalted conceptions of duty, the example of devotion set by the wife of the Heir to the Throne was particularly gratifying;

The nation liked to feel that the Prince had, as the papers told it, "a tower of strength in the amiable and beautiful Princess who had given him, in the fullness of its perfection, that happiness of domestic life which it prized as the very foundation of the national virtue."

It was with difficulty that she could be induced to quit his side even for short intervals. Once only during this period of trial did she leave the house, and then only for the purpose of attending church. Unaffectedly and sincerely religious, she had a firm belief in the efficacy of prayer. On the 1st of December the Prince, who had been delirious, suddenly asked what day it was, and, on being told, said: "Then it is the Princess's birthday." Taking this flash of intelligence as a sign of improvement, she wrote the following characteristic letter to the Rector of Sandringham:

"My husband being, thank God, somewhat better, I am coming to church. I must leave before the service closes so that I may watch beside his bedside. Can you not say a few words in prayer in the early part of the service that I may join with you in prayer for my husband before I return to him?"

This pathetic appeal, which the Rector ventured to communicate to the Press, produced a deep impression on the public. From the expressions of sympathy it elicited it was evident that "the republicans had misread the feeling of the nation."

On the 6th London was startled by wild rumours. The Prince was comatose. The Princess had abandoned hope. The Queen and

Royal Family had been telegraphed for. The impossibility of verifying them increased the agitation they created. It was felt that the bulletins, which were very carefully worded, concealed the truth. The bald statement that "the fever is high, but the Prince's strength is maintained" had an ominous ring.

On the 7th the agitation spread throughout the country. The news that the Queen had gone again to Sandringham still further increased the anxiety, which became intense when the public were informed that the Archbishop of Canterbury had ordered special prayers for the Prince's recovery to be offered in the churches.

The dread of the nation was aggravated by many personal grounds of sorrow. The personal danger of the Prince was paramount in the thoughts of all. The telegrams received from various towns testified to the universal and absorbing sympathy with which all classes watched the alternate ebb and flow of so precious a life.

The impression produced by the bulletins of the 11th was that of some overwhelming disaster. The doctors no longer concealed their anxiety. The Prince had passed through one crisis, but would he survive another? Leading articles in the Press reflected the grief and consternation of the people. The lamentation of the *Morning Post* was characteristic of the general tone.

"The heir of Egbert and Alfred," it wailed, "of the Edwards and the Henries is lying in the Valley of the Shadow of Death!"

When the history of this period comes to be written the historian of England will surely pause

to describe with emphasis the crisis through which the whole English people passed during the middle of December 1871. It was as if, with the Prince, the nation itself was expiring.

Meetings were held all over the country at which resolutions were passed expressing the devotion of the people for the Throne. No village was too small to utter its prayer or to testify its affection. The profound attachment of the nation to the Sovereign and her children, the intense interest felt by all in everything that concerned her happiness and theirs, was revealed daily during this illness of the Prince of Wales to a degree that surprised even those who were most convinced of the loyalty of the people of England to the Throne.

Many earnest-minded persons found a certain consolation in reflecting that such great distress compelled the nation to feel how close were the ties which united it; that the people were, after all, one national family; that the Throne and the cottage were bound together by living sympathies and regards; and that thus, amid the realities of adversity, each would learn to take a more serious, because more truthful and affectionate, view of their mutual relations.

To remain unmoved by the spectacle of such anxiety was impossible. All classes, all creeds, all parties caught the infection of loyalty. The Nonconformist Conference which was about to be held at Manchester, and to which great political importance had been attached, was indefinitely postponed "because profound sympathy with the Queen and the Princess of Wales

in their great sorrow demands a suspension of any political struggle."

More significant still was the attitude of the various republican clubs in London, whose members united to send a resolution of sympathy to the Queen. In the whole course of her reign Queen Victoria received no more striking token of loyalty than from these republicans, who, "while not concealing our decided preference for a republican over a monarchical form of government"—so their curious document ran—"yet desire, as Englishmen, to record our sorrow for the serious illness and protracted suffering of the Prince of Wales, and our heartfelt sympathy with the Queen and the members of the Royal Family under their present deep affliction; and we also desire to express our sincere hope that the life of the Prince of Wales may yet be spared."

The same hope, fortified by prayer, was expressed, too, by people all over the world. In Bombay the Parsees burnt sacred fire in their temples for his recovery. In Palestine, at the instigation of Sir Moses Montefiore, the Jews in the Holy City offered up their prayers to the Almighty on his behalf. From New York Cyrus W. Field, a prominent citizen, sent the following telegram to the British Government: "Fulton Street prayer-meeting and other praying assemblies in America unite with the Queen and people of England in daily supplications to Almighty God for the life and salvation of the Prince of Wales." The sick-bed at Sandringham riveted the attention of mankind.

The suspense increased with every bulletin:

"Death," as one paper expressed it, "appeared to play with its royal captive as a young panther with its victim. Again and again he struggled to free himself from its clutch, only to be drawn back, stifling and helpless, as if for the final sacrifice."

On the 13th it was announced that the life of the Prince hung by a thread. All hope was abandoned even by the most sanguine. Yet all through the night an immense multitude waited in the rain outside Marlborough House for the bulletins to appear. In King's Lynn it was with difficulty that they could be posted up, so great was the anxiety to know what news they contained. "Read it, mon, read it, and post it up arter!" roared a policeman when one was brought out.

To the 14th superstition gave a peculiar dread. As if to add to their gloomy apprehensions, the people were reminded that the 14th was the tenth anniversary of the death of the Prince Consort. In itself there was nothing in this fact to cause apprehension. It was morbid, even irrational, to suppose there could be any connection between the course of the Prince's illness and the accidental recurrence of a particular anniversary. All the same, the least superstitious admitted that they would experience an unusual sense of relief if it was announced at the close of the day that the Prince had passed through it without change.

It was indeed the final crisis. "No change," announced the bulletins throughout the day. The last, which appeared after midnight, re-

kindled hope. "The Prince," it stated, "is passing the night quietly." At Marlborough House a ringing cheer burst from the weary, waiting crowd, and people, as they dispersed, joyfully exclaimed to all they met, "Saved! The Prince sleeps!"

It was his servant, Blagge, who died.

In Sandringham church there is a brass eagle lectern presented by the Princess of Wales. On it is inscribed, eloquent in its significance of the trial through which she had passed :

TO THE GLORY OF GOD,

A THANKOFFERING FOR HIS MERCY.

14TH DECEMBER, 1871, ALEXANDRA.

"When I was in trouble I called upon the Lord, and He heard me."

On the 27th of the following February Queen Victoria, accompanied by all the Royal Family, drove in state to St. Paul's to offer up "a solemn Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the recovery of the Prince of Wales." For weeks beforehand the newspapers all over the kingdom discussed this event with as much interest as they had formerly displayed anxiety over the illness of the Prince. It was, in fact, the last act of the drama.

The great Cathedral was packed to its utmost capacity. Many thousands of applications for seats, it is said, were refused for lack of space. The ceremony was the grandest and most impressive ever held in England till then. The solemnity of the occasion, enhanced by the almost miraculous

recovery of the Prince, produced a feeling of awe in the vast assembly. At the sight of the Queen as she advanced up the nave with the Prince of Wales on her right, holding his eldest son by the hand, while the Princess, leading the younger, walked on her left "with pensive grace and looking beautiful in her dark blue velvet robe," few could restrain their tears.

But, if the spectacle in St. Paul's was impressive, it did not compare in significance with that which the London streets presented. If there were thousands inside St. Paul's, there were hundreds of thousands ranged along the route of the royal procession, which was seven miles in length. The day had been made a special Bank Holiday. Immense sums had been spent on decorating the streets and on the illuminations at night.

As a show, the procession was not much. Sanger's Circus, which followed it through the streets an hour or two later, exhibiting a real British lion, the most magnificent gilt cars imaginable, and a dexterous circus-rider who rode two piebald horses at the same time and drove five before him, was much more showy. The real interest was in the vast mass of human beings through whom the procession passed. From this point of view nothing could be a more brilliant success.

Though the Queen and the Prince aroused the liveliest curiosity, it was "the wife and Princess dear to the people" who received the greatest ovation.

A cynic would have said, and probably a great many did, that London was going mad. The truth was, however, the mass of the people still

regarded the Throne as the most national thing in the nation, possessed of powers which they did not give.

The thought uppermost in the minds of the masses was expressed simply on many an arch and banner.

On one was inscribed .

“ Well hast thou done a good wife’s part ”

On another :

“ To God, who spared his life,
To Jenner, Gull, and Lowe,
And to the Princess wife
Our gratitude we owe.”

She had proved her capacity as nurse as well as her devotion as wife. The Queen herself attributed the Prince’s recovery to the careful nursing he had received.

“ Had *my* Prince had the same treatment as the Prince of Wales,” she remarked sadly, “ he might not have died.”

III

Abroad, where people had been led to believe that Queen Victoria would be the last sovereign of England, the extraordinary demonstrations of loyalty displayed during the illness of the Prince of Wales made a very deep impression. After witnessing such scenes it was impossible for foreigners to refrain from admiring the English people, their political good sense and wonderful organisation which preserved them from violent

revolutions. It was, accordingly, regarded as proving "how deeply rooted is the monarchical faith in that great nation which, notwithstanding the adaptation of its mind and energy to modern circumstances, always remains at bottom Old England."

As a spectacle of complete national unity it most certainly deserved the admiration it aroused. The French Press, in particular, was eloquent on the lesson to be learnt from it.

"This England," exclaimed one journal, "which we were told was ready to become a Republic, which was accused of despising its Princes, and, having got rid of all its old-fashioned ideas of loyalty—come and see it to-day, note its grief, and be instructed !

"What a spectacle ! What a lesson !

"The Prince of Wales is dying, and yet upon the other side of the Channel no one laughs. The Princess of Wales quits the bedside of the dying man, not to seek necessary repose, but to hasten to the church to pray and to listen to prayer—and no one laughs. The Queen, whom calumny sought to wound but the other day, kneels with her veil of widowhood beside the probable death-bed of her first-born—and no one laughs. The Council—Gladstone, the Lord President, the Lord Chancellor, all whom England holds in the highest esteem for talent, or position, or age—which is also a dignity—address themselves to the Archbishop of Canterbury and call upon him to prepare new forms of prayer to appeal to the Almighty on behalf of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. And the people, instead

of mocking, rush to obtain copies of these prayers and repeat them in their places of worship. Lutherans, Calvinists, Methodists, Anglicans, Catholics, Jews, all implore the Deity to prolong the days of the future Sovereign of England. The people have the courage, the good sense not to disown either their history, their Government, or their God, and yet they are a free people among all—who will dispute that ?

“ Such a spectacle affects us Frenchmen greatly, and we look around us with bitterness. In vain, alas ! do we look for one of those powerful bonds of union upon which we might rely in a moment of trial. When shall *we* learn to pray altogether for anyone ? ”

The French Ambassador in London, the Duc de Broglie, was so affected by the spectacle of such loyalty and unity that he publicly compared the revolutions through which France had been struggling for eighty years with the orderly government of England, which since 1689 had never once seen its laws violated by the caprice of the Sovereign or the revolt of the people. “ A comparison,” commented the *Journal des Débats* bitterly and justly, “ in which the factions which pretend to have a monopoly of France for their mutual advantage may find their own condemnation.”

Nor was England itself less impressed by its own loyalty than foreign nations, upon whom it had the effect of still further increasing British prestige.

The anxiety through which the whole country had passed could not have been greater had peace

or war been hanging in the balance. All, for once, had formed a common wish. "Even the awkward squad of republicans," as was sneeringly said, "had caught the infection of loyalty, and with a protest asked to mutter a prayer." There was much more than the mere quickening of a personal interest in all this. To regard it only as a visible proof of the rooted affection with which Englishmen cling to their ancient monarchy was, as so often happens, to confound the effect with the cause. There were many for whom the astonishing scenes they had witnessed had a far deeper significance.

What was it, thoughtful people asked themselves, which, even in the presence of the eternal realities, subordinated every thought to the temporal issue of a life-and-death struggle on a single sick-bed in Norfolk? Why were churches and ministers of all sects and denominations watching for every change of symptom, which of itself might have seemed of passing import compared with the stupendous truths it was their more pressing duty to recall?

All who could think and feel were driven to consider *what* they were losing. When men lose anything, they lose, not so much the thing itself, as what they wish and hope it to be. The Prince, as conceived by the nation, was a national ideal, an old tradition, a creation of fond hopes. In losing him there was a vague consciousness of public danger. It was as if the highest branch of the great ancestral tree of the people was about to be broken off.

Though forms and circumstances have altered,

there is, after all, no more influential, more natural, or more sacred relation than that which subsists between the head of a great nation and those whose interests are entrusted to him. Whether he would or not, the Prince of Wales held towards all an intimate relationship which it is certain no one else could claim to have established. It had grown in the long years out of the nature implanted in the people. It was the sense of this reality which had risen to the surface, as it always does at such moments as the present. The Prince of Wales was valued for himself, it is true; but he was valued for more than that. It was not mere selfishness that made the people feel that they were threatened with a wound to their national existence.

In other words, the real explanation of this phenomenon—for such it was—is to be found in the ineradicable desire for protection and security inherent in man, from which the idea of royalty originated in the remotest antiquity. This idea, though changed in the evolution of human society out of all resemblance to its original conception, remains fundamentally the same. As time is to eternity, so is this idea to the desire from which it springs. Man being what he is, the one follows naturally, irresistibly from the other. The connection between the two is too metaphysical to be apparent, save in times when, for some reason or other, the desire for protection is felt as a fear or compelling necessity. In this desire is to be found the secret of the rise to power of every superman, whether he be hereditary, elected, or self-imposed. It explains the origin and over-

throw of every system of government. Despotism and liberty are alike born of it.

IV

In considering the lives of royal personages it is not by the publicity in which they are passed, but by the desire for privacy which this publicity stimulates, that they are to be judged.

In royalty, where its gratification is of necessity often impossible, and always extremely difficult, this desire is particularly strong. It is the fly in the ointment of privilege, so to speak, the *revers de médaille* of royal splendour. Even Louis XIV, that exemplar of kingly magnificence, with his Draconian conception of the laws of etiquette, wearied in the end of perpetual publicity. The need he felt of some retreat to which he could withdraw from the fierce rays of the light that beats upon a throne explains how he came to marry secretly a woman of fifty, three years older than himself and the governess of his children. Madame de Maintenon knew how to regulate the throne-light to perfection.

The desire to escape from the ferret-gaze of the world was one of the reasons that induced the disillusioned Charles V to end his days in a monk's cell at San Justo. It was the secret of the charm of Marie Antoinette's life at the Little Trianon. It suggested, too, the *petits soupers* in the *petits appartements* to the Regent d'Orléans and Louis XV. This passion for privacy has assumed many forms, but all have been equally ineffectual, for royalty can no more escape from the throne-light than a

man from his shadow. The *vie privée* of princes is either a public scandal or a public blessing.

In former times it was possible for royalty to regulate the throne-light to a certain extent. Now even this consolation is denied it. Democracy is no respecter of privacy, either in princes or private persons. To-day it is the people who have control of the meter.

It was considered not only natural, but salutary, that all which threw light on the morals of the Court should be jealously watched and keenly scrutinised. The opinion that the life of the Royal Family was a public one had been so often expressed that it had come to have the force of an unwritten law, which was subsequently confirmed on the Bench itself by the Lord Chief Justice.

"The Prince of Wales," he said, "cannot be a private man if he wishes. The Queen cannot live the life of a private woman if she wishes."

In theory this was to deprive royalty not only of the right to privacy, but to prescribe for it special and fixed rules of conduct as rigorous as if the obligation to conform to them was set down in some constitutional pact, and which, if obeyed, would atrophy it as completely as the etiquette of the pre-revolutionary era.

In practice, however, this politico-moral code for the regulation of royal lives proved impossible of application. Its injustice, rather than its severity, defeated its purpose. As it is a fundamental principle of British democracy that there is but one law for all, so there can be but one moral standard for all. The rules devised for

the conduct of royalty, to be capable of enforcement, must apply equally to the conduct of the nation generally, unless democracy is to stultify itself in the eyes of the people.

An example, humanly considered, cannot be other than a reflection. All men, regarded as examples, are mirrors. Democracy's ideal man is a magic mirror reflecting a people idealised by his example. Unfortunately such men are rare—in antiquity they were regarded as gods. Democracy's substitutes possess merely the power to reflect men as they are. If these substitutes are royal personages they magnify what they reflect by reason of the peculiar reflective quality of royalty. The sins of royalty are the exact counterpart of the sins of democracy.

The celebrated Baccarat Case, with which the Heir to the Throne was accidentally associated, in lifting the veil from the private life of the Prince of Wales, exposed the baseness of the public standard. The fullness with which it was reported corresponded exactly to the public interest in it. The light thrown on this *cause célèbre*, as well as upon all similar ones, revealed something much more disagreeable than the failings of a certain section of society. From the point of view of strict morality, the real evil lay, not in the failure of an Heir to a Throne to be the ideal example of democracy, but in the scabrous interest the public took in the case.

Nor was the indignation of the more austere, expressed in pulpits and Parliament, any more moral. The former was pharisaical, the latter political.

In reality it was public opinion that stood condemned before its own bar.

The Prince of Wales, writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury, attributed the attacks to which he was subjected to politics, and complained bitterly of their injustice. Abroad, opinion was entirely on his side. The French thought he might well be allowed to complain of the injustice which not only forbade any right to privacy, but enjoined on him a line of conduct that was not equally binding on his subjects. In America, where opinion was extremely sympathetic, it was felt that he had been made "a scape-goat of to appease a guilty public conscience and to furnish material for a conscienceless gutter press."

If democracy, in this attempt to deprive royalty of the power to gratify the desire for privacy, really sought a scape-goat it was shrewd enough, on second thoughts, to recognise the futility. Instead of breaking its "mirror," it made excuses for its unflattering reflection.

It was asserted in the pulpit that "a tendency to idealism finds a side-door for blunders at every step," and on political platforms Radical speakers were heard agreeing with Ernest Renan that the cause of Democracy which they championed often leads to results the exact opposite to those which they wish to obtain.

The tone of the press too proved how little it had really been influenced by the "morality" it had professed to uphold.

The *Manchester Guardian*, which has always had the well-merited reputation of expressing the sober

and considered views of the nation, observed that, if the Constitution took care that the Sovereign should be of the right faith it made no stipulation as to his morals. It considered that, as the nation had accepted the hereditary principle, it must accept its risks, and was almost bound to accept the person who turns up in the course of nature and make the most of him. There was no means of securing morality. The best kings morally had frequently been the worst politically. The fact was, the double blessing of such a sovereign as Queen Victoria had spoilt the people for a successor.

This eminently respectable organ of Liberal opinion argued that it was unnecessary to question the manner in which an Heir Apparent disposed of his leisure, for princes had as much right to liberty of action as peasants.

Such a *volte-face* justifies the cynicism of La Rochefoucauld. Its expediency appealed to the public with whose elastic morals it was fully in keeping.

It appealed also to the Princess, though for very different reasons. Living in the throne-light herself, she knew how it magnified and distorted all it illuminated. Excuses came easier to her than complaints. Brought up as she had been, marriage meant something more to her than a mere legal formality. She interpreted her marriage vows literally. For her, all the duties of wifehood were contained in the words "for better or worse." The fact, too, that she was something more than a wife heightened their importance. She never forgot that she was the consort of the

Heir to the Throne, and as such had to maintain the dignity of her position.

This, indeed, her husband rendered easy for her. The Prince of Wales always insisted on being treated with the respect due to his rank. Fully alive as he was to the importance of his exalted station, he could not fail to be sensible of the lustre his wife added to it. He liked her to be seen at his side, and to have her name identified with his. She could always be relied upon to stand by him at a critical juncture, and the universal respect and affection she inspired were in themselves a protection.

He knew her worth too well not to value it. Her dignity was, above everything, precious to him. A woman whom he had once distinguished by his regard was disgraced by being so indiscreet as to inquire how his "wife" was. To him she was always the "Princess" or the "Queen."

He was very proud of her beauty, and nothing pleased him more than to hear it extolled. He liked, too, to express his own admiration of her to others. An instance of this, which occurred at a ball at Marlborough House some years after their marriage, is related by the wife of a distinguished ambassador who was present. "It was a small dance," she wrote, "only about three hundred. The Princess wore a dress of many shaded soft reds, and in her hair were red hollyhocks with one large diamond in the heart of each. Observing that I was looking at her with unfeigned admiration, the Prince of Wales said to me, 'This is quite an exceptional occasion. We have asked all the prettiest and best-looking women

we know; there is not a single plain one, but,' he added with a pleased smile, 'the Princess is the most beautiful of all.' "

V

Their affection for their children was an inflexible bond of union and sympathy. In common with royalty generally since the French Revolution, both had the family instinct highly developed. The Prince, for all his love of pleasure, was essentially a family man. He was passionately fond of his children. Through them the Princess always retained his affection, and in her quiet, unobtrusive way exerted a powerful influence over him.

Their first child was born on the 8th of January, 1864, at Frogmore, a house in Windsor Park, where they spent the greater part of the winter after their marriage. This event, which was not expected till two months later, occurred under rather remarkable circumstances. On the day in question there was a hockey match on the ice at Virginia Water, which had recently frozen. The Prince, who was one of the players, had provided an elaborate lunch, to which a large number of people were invited. The day was fine, and the scene was one of great animation. The Princess, apparently in the best of health, arrived at eleven and remained until four in the afternoon, being occasionally drawn about the ice on a sledge. Shortly after her return to Frogmore, however, she became suddenly indisposed. When the Prince arrived an hour later he found her in travail, and the household in a state

of the greatest confusion. As preparations had been made for the *accouchement* to take place at Marlborough House, nothing was in readiness for the event. A physician was hastily summoned from Windsor, and "a Dr. Brown, a general practitioner of considerable local repute," had the honour of bringing the babe into the world. He was assisted by the Countess of Macclesfield, the Princess's lady-in-waiting, who wrapped the child in one of her own garments. A Court doctor arrived shortly afterwards, but the nurses did not reach Frogmore till two in the morning.

The announcement of the birth of a son and heir to the Prince of Wales was received with great popular rejoicing throughout the country, and the pomp with which he was christened in St. George's Chapel indicated the dynastic importance that attached to his birth. Until his coming of age, when Queen Victoria created him Duke of Clarence and Avondale, he was known to the British public simply as Prince Albert Victor.

The Prince and Princess of Wales had afterwards five other children: Prince George (King George V) born in 1865, and the Princesses Louise, Victoria, and Maud, born respectively in 1867, 1868, and 1869. Prince Alexander John, who was born in 1872, lived only two days.

The qualities that made the Princess of Wales so admirable as a wife were equally conspicuous in the mother. Though prevented by the exacting duties of her position from nursing her children, as she greatly desired, they received her unremitting attention. She selected their nurses

personally and attached them to her by many marks of kindness.

As an instance of this Madame Jerichau, a Danish artist who had been commissioned to paint her portrait shortly after the birth of the Duke of Clarence, tells the following story :

“The little Prince Albert Victor had, as wet nurse, a handsome young Irish woman of robust health. Some time after entering on her duties, however, she suddenly began to decline without any visible reason. The doctors who examined her were quite unable to detect the cause, nor could she herself offer any suggestion. The Princess’s maternal instinct, however, solved the riddle. She inquired the whereabouts of the nurse’s own infant, sent for it, and suddenly placed it in its mother’s arms. The effect was instantaneous. The mother’s joy at seeing her child again was so great that she recovered at once. The child remained about a week at Marlborough House and shared the life of the little Prince.”

Though living, as she was compelled, in a perpetual whirl of movement and excitement, the Princess always contrived to find time to look after her young children.

“She was in her glory,” relates Mrs. Blackburn, the head nurse, “when she could run up to the nursery, put on a flannel apron, wash the children herself, and see them asleep in their little beds.”

She taught them to obey their nurses, and desired, in return, that they should be treated with as little ceremony as possible. As soon as they had learned to read and write they were provided

with German and French governesses to familiarise them with those languages, which it is essential that children in their station should acquire.

Family unity was the ideal at which she aimed in their upbringing. This she sought to achieve by love—the only sure way. Especially did she encourage her children to return the affection of their father, whose parental pride in them was such that he invariably sent for them to show them to all who visited him without any ceremony. Every year, on his birthday, she composed a little verse for each to recite to him in honour of it—a touching incident that proves the purity of their home life.

On the Duke of Clarence the fondest hopes of both parents were centred. This was but natural ; he was the eldest son, the heir—a fact of supreme importance to royalty. The most striking and most generally known feature of his character was his affection for his beautiful mother, whom he closely resembled. She was ever in his thoughts, and in conversation he constantly reverted to her. He liked at Sandringham to go for long walks with her, his arm in hers or round her waist. At Cambridge he was never so happy as when she came to see him.

“Mamma is so nice,” he said to his tutor once. “She is fond of everything I like. There is nobody like mamma.”

Though scarcely known to the general public, his death from influenza, on the 14th of January, 1892, was the occasion of another of those remarkable popular demonstrations of loyalty to the

Throne which, in spite of the Radical tendencies of the age, were so curiously characteristic of the people.

During his brief illness scenes similar to those which attended his father's twenty years previously were repeated. In the present instance their cause was more apparent. The wave of Republicanism, so pronounced in the earlier years of Queen Victoria's reign, had spent itself. Her long and glorious rule had given a fresh and special lustre to the monarchical principle. The Royal Family had somehow come to symbolise the unity of the British Empire. The *entente* between the Throne and the people was perfect and sympathetic. There was, moreover, a personal element in the unexpected death of the young Prince, stricken at the outset of his career, and on the eve of his marriage, which profoundly stirred the heart of the public.

Gladstone said that the nation had experienced no shock equal to it in the whole course of his life. He compared it to that caused by the universally lamented death of the popular Princess Charlotte, George IV's only child, and heir to the Throne, which had occurred seventy-six years before, and which he could recollect.

The death of his beloved son was the first real sorrow that the Prince of Wales, so favoured by fortune, had ever known. He felt it deeply, and gave vent to his grief unrestrainedly. "When the end came," said one who was present, "the Prince bowed his head in his hands and sobbed aloud, but the Princess looked as if she was turned to marble."

The calm demeanour with which she had watched the life of her idolised son ebbing away filled the attendants with amazement. All thought of self was lost in her anxiety to minister to his last hours, and with that wonderful self-restraint that invariably characterised her in great crises, she suppressed all semblance of grief lest it should trouble the peaceful passing of her child.

In this dark hour religion was her only support. A sermon preached by Canon Fleming in Sandringham church ten days after the death of the Duke of Clarence afforded the Princess so much comfort that she requested him to publish it and distribute the proceeds between the Gordon Boys' Home, in which the Duke had taken a special interest, and the Home for Incurables at Streatham, the first institution of which she was patroness. According to Canon Fleming the circulation of this little book, entitled *Recognition in Eternity*, unprecedented in the sale of a single sermon, was due entirely to the following incident which the Princess herself related to the Canon, and which, but for the fact that at his request she permitted him to print it on the first page of the book, would be almost too sacred to publish.

"Shortly before Eddy's death," she said, "he was lying as if in a sleep. Suddenly he raised himself up from his pillow, and, looking round the room, said twice, 'Who's that calling me?—who's that calling me?' I gently said, 'It is Jesus calling you,' and I hope he heard me."

As Canon Fleming justly says, "I ask, could any mother, when her mother's heart was well-nigh breaking, have given her dying boy an

answer more tender, more beautiful, more Christ-like ?

“Then she added,” he continues :

“ ‘In 1888 all my five children received the Holy Communion with me, and I gave Eddy a little book and wrote in it :

“ Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

and also :

“ Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
O Lamb of God, I come.”

“ ‘When he was gone, and lay like one sleeping, we laid a cross of flowers on his breast, and after we had done so I turned to the table at his bedside, and saw the little book in which were written these words, and I could not help feeling that he *did* cling to the cross, and that it had all come true.’ ”

She would have buried him in the little church at Sandringham, but it was imperative that he should be interred in the royal vault at Windsor. Each night before the coffin was removed she spent some time in prayer beside it. After the funeral she wrote to her mother : “I have buried my angel to-day, and with him my happiness.”

Many months elapsed before she was seen in public again. But she never forgot. There is a volume of meaning in a little brass plate facing the worshipper in the royal pew at Sandringham church. It bears the poignant inscription :

“This place was occupied for twenty-eight years

by my darling Eddy, next to his ever-loving and sorrowing mother."

The strength of the domestic affection revealed by this crushing blow evoked universal sympathy and admiration. The American Press generally was eloquent on the subject. In describing the death of the Duke of Clarence, and the grief it caused his parents, it said :

"The domestic traditions were followed just as faithfully at Marlborough House as at Windsor. The Prince of Wales's has been not merely a good but a devoted family, if ever there was one. The Princess, whose whole life has been beautiful, is in nothing more beautiful than in her love for her children."

In the fierce light that beats upon a throne nothing shines so brightly as the virtue of royalty. Like the sun, it radiates far and wide, seen of all the world.

CHAPTER VI

THE QUEEN AND STATE AFFAIRS

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I

THE peace that followed the first Schleswig War was a turbulent one for Denmark. If the succession was settled, the more intricate problem of the status of Schleswig-Holstein continued unsolved. Squabbles between Denmark and the Duchies, in which Germany took part, were endless.

In 1863 Hall, the Liberal Danish Minister,

proposed to cut the Gordian knot by detaching Holstein, which, however, was still to recognise the titular sovereignty of the King, while Schleswig remained, as before, united to Denmark. The bill was passed by both Chambers of the Danish Parliament. Two days later Frederick VII died suddenly (13th of November, 1863) before the bill had received his signature.

It is said that the Princess of Wales was in the hunting field when informed that her father had become King of Denmark, and, on hearing the news, clapped her hands for joy.

To Christian IX, however, the occasion was anything but one for rejoicing. His accession placed him in an extraordinarily difficult position. The bill which awaited his signature invalidated the Protocol to which alone he owed his throne. If he signed it Germany declared that she would refuse to recognise him, while, if he yielded to this threat, the Danes demanded his abdication. The question of the succession and the whole interminable Schleswig-Holstein question were thus once more reopened in a most acute form. Christian hesitated for three days, and then, under pressure, followed the line of least apparent resistance, and signed. It was a fateful hour in Danish history.

The son of the old Duke of Augustenburg, who had renounced his claims to the Duchies in 1852 for a money compensation, refused to be bound by his father's bargain. Encouraged by Germany, he at once proclaimed himself Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, and was received with acclamation by the people, who believed his claim was based on

justice and right. At the same time Bismarck demanded the withdrawal of the bill within forty-eight hours, and, to enforce this demand, an army of Prussians and Austrians entered Holstein. The Danes, counting on the armed intervention of England, France, and Russia, guaranteed by the treaty of 1852, determined to resist. The victorious issue of the First Schleswig War had bred over-confidence. Anyone who ventured to suggest caution was denounced as a coward or traitor. Unable to defend Holstein, the Danish army, 40,000 strong, entrenched itself in Schleswig.

But treaties are merely temporary expedients. Such moral force as they possess is based on fluctuating national interest. Russia, which had not yet recovered from the Crimean War, drew back at the start. France appeared cynically indifferent. She even secretly sought to obtain from Germany "advantages on the Rhine" as the price of her neutrality. England alone manifested an inclination to respect the treaty. The British Government offered to discuss the question at a conference in London. The proposal was rejected by Prussia, and the Second Schleswig War began.

It goes without saying that the daughter of Christian IX could not remain an idle spectator of the struggle. The Danes, who, with this very contingency in view, had regarded her marriage to the Prince of Wales with so much satisfaction, now counted on her to obtain the aid of England. In this they were encouraged by the loudly expressed popular sympathy with their cause which had been aroused here by the sight of a

small country being bullied by two large ones. Meetings were held all over England to urge the Government to take action. The great popularity of the Princess served still further to strengthen the agitation in favour of armed intervention.

The general opinion on the situation was amusingly expressed by the following lines which appeared in *Punch* the week after the birth of the Duke of Clarence :

NURSERY SONG FOR THE NEW BABY

O slumber, my darling, thy sire is a Prince
Whom Mamma beheld skating not five hours since.
And Grandpapa Christian is off to the fray
With Germans, who'd steal his nice duchy away.

But slumber, my darling, the English are true,
And they'll help him for love of Mamma and of you,
And the Channel Fleet's coming with powder and shot
And the Germans must run, or they'll catch it all hot.¹

In Ireland "100 Irish volunteers of good family" formed themselves into a corps known as the "Alexandra Cent Gardes" for service in Denmark. They were commanded by "a gentleman of Cork noted for his success in the hunting field." As an instance of the electric state of public opinion at the time, this chivalrous gesture of a by-gone age failed to excite ridicule. For reasons of State, however, the "Alexandra Cent Gardes" were not permitted to leave Ireland.

To induce the British Government to come to the assistance of Denmark, the Princess strained every nerve. In this she received staunch sup-

¹ January 16, 1864.

port from her husband. The Prince of Wales quite openly expressed his sympathy for Denmark, and gave free vent to his indignation at the failure of the Powers to support the Danes as they had undertaken to do by the terms of the London Protocol of 1852. He refused to allow the Austrian Ambassador to meet the Princess, and, to emphasise his contempt, told the French Ambassador very significantly what he thought of the pusillanimous conduct of his Government. In his opinion the Danes were right to resist. "They are a brave people," he said, "who prefer death to any kind of humiliation."

The chief obstacle to a war on behalf of Denmark with Prussia and Austria, to which the country seemed to be drifting, was Queen Victoria. She was resolved on neutrality, and there was no length to which she was not prepared to go to maintain it. The conduct of the Prince of Wales greatly annoyed her, and it only served to strengthen her determination to deny him any participation in the affairs of State. As for the Princess, the Queen warned her of the danger of attempting to seek to influence the policy of the Government. To silence all further opposition in her family, she refused to allow the subject of Schleswig-Holstein to be mentioned in her presence.

With the Government she was equally firm. The threat of Palmerston to the Austrian Ambassador, that "if the Austrian fleet went to the Baltic it would have to reckon with the British Navy," filled her with the deepest indignation. When expressions were introduced into the Queen's Speech on the Opening of Parliament which she

considered would commit England to war, she insisted on their removal, and even threatened to dissolve Parliament if it did not adopt a conciliating and neutral policy.

This attitude, so vehemently opposed to that of the mass of her subjects, exposed the Queen to much bitter censure. It was attributed, not unnaturally, to her well-known German sympathies. In reality they were German only in so far as she favoured the claim of the Duke of Augustenburg, which the Duchies upheld and which she believed to be just. She understood the complicated Schleswig-Holstein question thoroughly, and her ministers themselves frequently admitted that "she surprised them with the minuteness and accuracy of her knowledge." She certainly did not approve of the Duchies being torn from Denmark, from which they were fighting to be free, only to be forcibly annexed by Prussia. Neither, it is only fair to add, did the Hohenzollerns themselves. At the conclusion of the war the King of Prussia wished them to enter the German Confederation as an independent State under the sovereignty of their Duke. In this he was supported by his son, the Crown Prince Frederick. Their subsequent annexation by Prussia and the dispossession of the Duke was the work of Bismarck, who, as he confessed in his *Memoirs*, was "willing to take all the blame or the credit for it."

In any case, whatever her sympathies, the Queen was unquestionably right in refusing to expose England, single-handed, to a war with two of the most powerful nations in Europe in

which no one could foresee the consequences or estimate the advantages. Nor did it take much persuasion to make the Government come round to her view. Even Palmerston's ardour for war was cooled by the indifference of Russia and France. It was inspired by indignation rather than sympathy. While advocating, as he did, the cause of Denmark, he strongly condemned her policy towards the Duchies to which their disaffection was due.

The learned Professor Max Müller of Oxford, whose opinion carried great weight, powerfully supported the Queen. In a series of very able articles in the *Times* he exposed the hollowness of the Danish claim to Schleswig-Holstein. "Denmark is wrong," he declared, "from beginning to end."

Others, equally distinguished, expressed similar views. Many, too, who had sympathised with the Danes, after dispassionately examining the question, subsequently admitted they had been mistaken.

But, while Queen Victoria was not prepared to go to war, she was quite prepared to mediate. Three months after hostilities had begun the British Government succeeded in arranging an armistice. The spirit, however, in which the belligerents agreed to it gave little promise of peace. Though worsted on land, the Danes had been victorious at sea. The very day that they consented to an armistice their fleet signally defeated the combined Prussian and Austrian squadron off Heligoland.

Two months later, as neither side could come

to any agreement, the war was resumed. The Danish army was driven from the mainland, and the German troops overran all Jutland to the Skaw. Confined in their islands, and foiled in their hopes of European intervention, the Danes were compelled to sue for peace. The treaty that followed stripped Denmark of Schleswig-Holstein, whereby she lost two-fifths of her territory and population.

The cynical manner in which Prussia and Austria appropriated the Duchies still further added to her humiliation. By way of justifying their annexation—which Bismarck afterwards declared was his intention from the start—Prussia and Austria maintained that, as Denmark had failed to observe the London Protocol in the first instance, they were no longer bound by it, and that the Duchies were theirs by right of conquest. Holstein was Austria's share of the plunder, Schleswig, Prussia's. In 1866, however, Prussia took Holstein from Austria by force of arms, and both Duchies were incorporated into a province of the kingdom of Prussia.

As for Duke Frederick of Augustenburg, whom Bismarck had used as a tool, to be thrown aside when no longer of use, he was permitted to retain the barren title of Duke of Schleswig-Holstein. Subsequently, as a further compensation, his daughter, Augusta Victoria, married the future Kaiser Wilhelm II, while his only brother, Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, married Princess Helena of Great Britain, a daughter of Queen Victoria.

II

The Princess of Wales was wounded in her tenderest feelings by her failure to obtain the support of England for Denmark. It was her heart that suffered rather than her pride. She had felt her father's position acutely. His request had seemed so natural, her response so easy. In her inexperience, she thought she had but to say the word that would set into play the redoubtable force capable of subduing and curbing the predatory attempt on her native land. The sympathy which she heard expressed everywhere justified her in thinking as she did. To a nature such as hers a rebuff was like a blow. The warning of Queen Victoria was a rough awakening from a pleasant dream to the stern reality of practical existence. What hurt her most in the Queen's remonstrance was that anything so base as a political motive should be attributed to her devotion to her father's cause. As if, when his throne and the existence of her country were at stake, she could think of politics!

The conduct of the Government seemed even more callous. Could anything be more cruel than to raise hopes only to dash them?

"It is my strong conviction," wrote Professor Max Müller, in his irrefutable way, "that the war was mainly brought about by the encouragement given to Denmark and the taunts levelled at Germany by a portion of the English Press."

But it was with herself that the Princess was most keenly disappointed. Realising how much

had been expected of her in Denmark, she felt as if she had failed it in its hour of need. She blamed herself for its sufferings. Every fresh disaster had seemed to her a fresh reproach. Exhausted by the agitation of which she was the centre, and disillusioned by the insincerity and falseness of what she had believed to be sincere and true, she sank into a state of great depression. What a mockery was her popularity! What irony in Tennyson's famous, oft-quoted line, "We are all of us Danes in our welcome of thee!"

Embittered by failure, many a woman in her position would have yielded—as Princesses of Wales before her had done—to the temptations of the popular and powerful anti-German party and sown dissension in the Court and country. But bitterness and revenge were alike foreign to her nature, though she never forgave Bismarck. Once, many years later, when the Emperor William I visited the British Court, he playfully asked one of the royal children what it would like him to give it. "The head of Bismarck!" whispered the Princess, who was standing near, loud enough for the Emperor to hear.

Fortunately, the natural goodness and cheerfulness of her character reacted from these depressing influences. The sympathy she received from her husband in this time of trial was a great consolation. He showed it in many tactful ways. During the war he studied to break bad news to her as gently as possible. A member of his household who caused her an attack of nerves by the brusque announcement of a Danish defeat was made to feel the full weight of his displeasure.

On the conclusion of the struggle he suggested that they should pay a visit to Denmark with their little son. It was a happy idea, and the spirits of the Princess rapidly revived at the prospect of seeing her beloved parents and old home again.

The British Government was very doubtful as to the advisability of the visit. The Danes considered that England, on whose armed support, guaranteed by the London Protocol, they had counted to the last, had betrayed them.

When it was known that the Prince of Wales intended to accompany the Princess the Danish Press plainly intimated that, whatever might be his private sentiments, he must be looked on in Denmark as the political representative of the nation through whose treachery the country had been robbed of her fairest possessions.

Queen Victoria, however, in giving her consent, counted on the Princess's well-known devotion to her country to allay any mistrust. In this, as usual, she proved her wisdom. The Princess herself had no doubts as to the heartiness with which she would be welcomed. At Bernstorff the crowds were so great that, to acknowledge the salutations of the people, she was obliged to rise in her carriage that all might see her.

The warmth of her greeting atoned for all that she had suffered. To a long-winded address of welcome by a Lutheran pastor she listened with the closest attention, and, from the manner in which her colour came and went, it was easy to see how deeply it gratified her.

It was always thus whenever she visited Denmark.

On one of these occasions, many years later, an Englishman who witnessed her arrival wrote :

" I have never seen her look better or more handsome. Surrounded as she was by the greatest in the land, she stood out peerless and beautiful. Her equal was not there. As an Englishman I could not help feeling proud as I looked upon her charming, sweet face and thought she was *our* Princess.

" She seems to have been almost idolised in Denmark. The love for her here is intense. People tell stories of her young life, little incidents of her goodness and courtesy, probably quite forgotten by her. ' She is ours still,' they say ; ' she is Danish ! ' "

As for the Prince of Wales, though at first received coldly by the general public, he won golden opinions from those with whom he came into personal contact. Soon one heard nothing but delighted expressions of his charm of manner and kindly feeling. The officers of the Danish fleet, in particular, were loud in their praise. From the knowledge he exhibited of nautical affairs, and the various details of the service, when entertained by them, they believed it was he, and not his brother Prince Alfred, who had passed so much time at sea.

As the visit proceeded the opinion of the public changed. At Copenhagen, where it was feared that he might meet with a hostile demonstration, his reception was " more than friendly : it was enthusiastic." On his state visit to the opera, both within and without the building, the ovation he received was such that he was said by the

Press to have "conquered the Danes, as his wife had conquered the English."

III

The intercession of the Princess of Wales in behalf of Denmark was her first and last appearance in the political arena. The spirit of intrigue was entirely foreign to her nature, and politics never at any time had any attraction for her. Nevertheless, her exalted position, by reason of her family connections, rendered her politically important in certain matters relating to foreign policy with which diplomacy is concerned.

It is characteristic of democracy to seek to deny the importance of royal alliances. But the jealousy of royal influence to which this is due is itself proof to the contrary. Every royal alliance possesses a political value, which is often greatest when it is minimised.

In attempting to divest the marriage of the Prince of Wales to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark of any political consideration, Queen Victoria only sought to divest it of the particular importance the Danes sought to give it. The difference between Danish and English interests rendered this comparatively easy. The marriage was so evidently to the advantage of Denmark that, when it failed to accomplish what the Danes expected from it, it seemed to lose any political significance whatever.

The benefit that England derived from it, however, was by no means a negligible quantity. British diplomacy had begun to turn it to account

even during the very festivities of the wedding. The Greek throne was going a-begging. It was an honour for which there was no aspirant. Stripped of their romantic glamour, the Greeks were looked upon in Europe as a half-civilised, untrustworthy, and turbulent people with an exaggerated sense of their own importance. For some thirty years—in fact, ever since they had gained their independence from the Turks—their throne had been occupied by Otto of Bavaria. He had, however, rendered himself increasingly unpopular by his ill-advised methods of government, and had finally been deposed.

In their anxiety to fill his place, the Greeks had offered the Crown to Prince Alfred, the younger brother of the Prince of Wales. He had not the least desire for it, and was, moreover, barred from accepting it by an agreement between the Great Powers, which excluded all members of their reigning houses.

But, though the British Government was unable, and Queen Victoria unwilling, to put a British prince on the vacant throne, both were equally desirous to find a substitute, who, by owing his crown to England, could be depended on to further English interests in Greece. Prince William, the second son of Prince Christian and the favourite brother of the Princess of Wales, whom he closely resembled, was accordingly suggested to the Greeks, who, being very pro-English at the time, accepted him willingly. Indeed, so anxious were they to fill their vacant throne that when the President of the Assembly proposed, “as a simple Greek citizen, that, just

as in one day they had got rid of the old king, so they should in one day choose the new one," he was elected unanimously.

In their haste, however, they nearly upset the whole scheme. For Prince Christian, fearing the opposition of Frederick VII, on his return to Copenhagen after his daughter's wedding, had failed to inform the King, who first learnt from the public Press what was in the wind. Indignant at being slighted, and interpreting the scheme as an attempt to compromise him in the eyes of his subjects and entangle Denmark in the affairs of Greece, the Danish monarch raised so many objections that Prince Christian, whose position had become embarrassing, desired to withdraw from the undertaking altogether, to the great disgust of the Greeks, who openly declared their intention of seeking another king.

To prevent this, the British Government, which, while ready to stand sponsor for Prince William, had no desire to support him actively, deemed it advisable to offer Greece the Ionian Islands as a sop. To appease Frederick VII, however, was a more difficult matter. Before giving his consent, which was essential, he obliged Prince William to renounce for himself and his descendants all claims to the Danish throne in order to secure Denmark from any possible entanglement.

George I, as Prince William was henceforth known, regarded the whole affair as an adventure, and was ready to consent to anything. He was barely eighteen when he arrived in Greece. Sir Horace Rumbold, the British Minister in Athens at the time, said that he "possessed such boyish,

animal spirits it was difficult for him to preserve the gravity due to his royal position." He had, however, plenty of courage, which was the essential requisite, and ability developed with experience. From the start he gave his excitable subjects to understand very clearly that "he kept his portmanteau ready packed" to leave at a moment, if they made things unpleasant for him. The threat served to extricate him many a time from critical situations which, as was said on one occasion, "would have taxed even Napoleonic statesmanship."

Thanks to his powerful family connections, he won for Greece consideration and indulgence again and again, which it is no exaggeration to say she would certainly not have obtained otherwise.

How much significance the Russian Government attached to the influence to which he owed his throne may be judged from the fact that his marriage to the Grand Duchess Olga, the Czar's cousin, was regarded in Russia as "a proper check upon any excess of Anglophil tendencies which might be manifested by the brother of the Princess of Wales."

His assassination in 1913, after a reign of fifty years, was a blow to British prestige in Greece. It was reported that, when Queen Alexandra was informed of the news, she completely broke down and had to be helped to bed in a state of collapse.

IV

When the history of Europe during the past fifty years comes to be written the historian can-

not fail to call attention to the family affections of the House of Glucksburg and their influence on international affairs. There are many, no doubt, to whom the statement will seem novel and exaggerated; if so, they will hardly be found in the Embassies, Legations, or Foreign Offices of the Great Powers. The family affections of the Glucksburgs have been a factor of immense political importance in European diplomacy since Princess Alexandra of Denmark married the Prince of Wales, though, judging from the manner in which the various Governments, whose interest it was to exploit it, endeavoured to turn it to account, it is evident its true character was long misunderstood.

The reason is simple. The political value of the deep affection that existed between the members of King Christian IX's family lay in its *unity*. To obtain from it the great advantages it possessed, it was necessary to respect this quality. It took European diplomacy long to realise this, and in the process it was affection which exploited diplomacy, with results contrary to what the diplomatists originally had intended.

Dislike of Prussia was a fetish with the family of Christian IX. They never forgave the Hohenzollerns for the loss of Schleswig-Holstein.

On arriving at Kiel when returning to England after her first visit to Denmark in 1864, the Princess of Wales noticed that the Prussian flag had been hoisted on the royal yacht in which she travelled from Copenhagen. Turning to one of her suite, she demanded that the flag should be taken down. She was reminded that they

were now in Prussian waters, and that to do so would be to offer an insult to Prussia.

"It doesn't matter in the least," replied the Princess firmly. "I shall not move one step till that flag is hauled down."

And it was.

The marriages of King Christian's children intensified this anti-Prussian spirit. For a century it had been the custom of Danish royalty to seek German alliances. After the humiliation of the Schleswig War, which all but cost Christian IX his crown, this custom ceased.

His eldest son, Crown Prince Frederick, married Princess Louise of Sweden, the only daughter of Charles XV, Bernadotte's son. Sweden had been intensely anti-German in the war. Prince Waldemar, the youngest, went even further afield. His wife, Princess Marie of Orleans, was French and Catholic—a fact to which much political significance was attached, the more so as the House of Glucksburg was Protestant and had never before made a Catholic alliance.

Still more significant was the marriage of Princess Thyra, King Christian's youngest daughter.

"The Princess," says one who knows her well, "was good, clever, and charming. She had the most beautiful, large, dark blue eyes with a wonderful expression of truthfulness and goodness in them. A tragic bereavement turned her golden hair snow-white, but, when I saw her again after a lapse of some years, her eyes seemed to me more beautiful than ever. Queen Alexandra, once speaking to me of her sister and all the sorrow

that had befallen her, said, ' Why should it ? For she is the best woman I know ; really quite angelic.' Her marriage to the Duke of Cumberland was a real love match, and afforded both families the greatest satisfaction."

She had been much sought after. The Duke of Connaught and the Prince Imperial had both been reported engaged to her. The Duke of Cumberland, whom she eventually married, was the avowed and inveterate enemy of the Hohenzollerns, who had robbed his father of the kingdom of Hanover and confiscated his estates. The hostility of the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland to the Kaiser was intense, and for a long time they refused to consent to the marriage of their eldest son to his only daughter. The Duke only yielded in the end when the Prussian Government permitted his son to succeed to the ducal throne of Brunswick, to which, as ex-King of Hanover, he was heir. He refused, however, to attend the wedding, nor would he consent when, to appease him, the Kaiser offered to give him back his Hanoverian estates, though they were of enormous value, if he would renounce his claims to the throne which was quite out of his grasp.

" My son shall never say, after my death," he replied, " that his father sold his birthright for gold."

He was a *grand seigneur* of the most spotless honour. At the Court of the Emperor Francis Joseph, who also had his grudge against the Hohenzollerns, the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland were granted the rank of King and Queen. The Duke, indeed, regarded himself as a king,

and in his palace in Vienna and at the Castle of Gmunden he lived in regal state. As he was also a member of the British Royal Family, his servants wore the scarlet liveries with large capes of the days of George III.

The political importance of these marriages in itself was almost negligible. They merely indicated a decided German aversion in much the same way as the marriages of Queen Victoria's children indicated her equally strong German *penchant*. Nevertheless, when taken in conjunction with the alliances formed by the Princesses Alexandra and Dagmar, which preceded them, they acquired immense political significance.

To Christian IX and Denmark the marriages of his children were of the greatest advantage. Though he became one of the most popular monarchs that ever occupied the Danish throne, he could scarcely be said to have lived in the hearts of his subjects in the first years of his reign. For, while even the most disaffected were obliged to admit that royalty had never appeared so irreproachable as in his domestic circle, the people generally blamed him for the humiliations which were largely due to their own blunders. There is little doubt that the visit the Princess of Wales paid her parents after the war saved her father from the peril of abdication, while the marriage of the Princess Dagmar still further strengthened the throne and produced a feeling of security in the country generally. It was regarded as a sort of consolation and encouragement that the reigning house was able to form such important alliances.

Princess Dagmar's marriage to the Czarevitch was particularly gratifying, as it seemed to be a guarantee from further German aggression. She had been previously engaged to his elder brother, on whose premature death, after a brief illness, he had become heir to the Throne of All the Russias. Their marriage was reported to be the dying wish of the late Czarevitch, the fulfilment of which was regarded as a pious obligation by both.

In England and France, however, this was considered as merely a pretext to veil some deep-laid scheme of the Czar, who was credited with the desire to be revenged for the Crimean War. The Press of both countries was violently agitated, and Russia was openly accused of secretly conspiring with Prussia to partition Denmark, which she was told neither England nor France would tolerate.

This accusation was bitterly resented by the Russian Government through the paper which was believed to voice its opinions.

"The key of war and peace in Continental Europe," it retorted ominously, "is by no means held on the banks of the Thames and Seine, as some affect to think. The community of Russian and Prussian interests is confirmed by the glorious remembrance of 1812."

Realising the danger of continuing such a controversy, the *Times* as the organ of British Government hastened to pour oil on the troubled waters. In a leading article remarkable for the shrewdness of its observations, it remarked sarcastically, with a curious mingling of affected indifference and flattery :

“We envy the faith of those who still attach political importance to Imperial matrimonial alliances. A King or Crown Prince marries a Princess nowadays, not a country. Russia takes nothing from Denmark but a Danish bride; she gives nothing, owes nothing in return. We certainly attach no belief to the rumours of a projected partition of the Scandinavian kingdom between Russia and Prussia. But, if devoid of all political results for Denmark, the Imperial marriage may not be without momentous consequences on the destinies of Russia herself.

“A young Prince of one and twenty can hardly be inaccessible to the pure-minded and lovely being destined to fill up so large a part of his existence. Those who have been admitted to the domestic circle of Danish Royalty know the full value of the boon Providence has vouchsafed to Holy Russia. We only hope the young Princess may find in Russia as much happiness as her sweet presence seems intended to bring with it.”

From all of which one may judge, in spite of democratic prejudice to the contrary, whether international royal marriages possess political significance or not.

If, as there have since been grounds for supposing, this marriage was really to be interpreted as a sign of Russia's friendliness rather than hostility to France and England, the rebuff she received had the effect of driving her into the arms of Germany and keeping her there till the end of the Bismarckian regime.

For the next fifteen years diplomacy attached no political importance to the Princess Dagmar.

Yet her value as a political factor, though unperceived, was increasing yearly with compound interest. The rivalry between England and Russia continued. An alliance was formed between Russia, Germany, and Austria for mutual protection—some said for mutual aggrandisement. It was known as the Dreibund, or Emperors' League. The Allies met each year to renew their pledges in full view of the world. At the same time Christian IX's children and their families reassembled in the home of their childhood and quietly renewed their memories of the past.

The German Emperor was the first to realise the importance of these annual reunions and the far-reaching hostile influences they were capable of exercising. To defeat them, he sought in vain to be included in that too friendly circle of which he knew full well he was the *bête noire*. It was the mistrust which these meetings, so dear to Alexander III, created between Russia and Germany that eventually destroyed the friendship which had existed so long between their rulers. The dissensions, however, which diplomacy now began with serious intention to sow in the family affections of the Glucksburgs fell on barren soil. Whatever the political aims of the various Powers, whether they differed or changed, those of Christian IX and his children remained unalterable and identical. Their one object was to find themselves on the same side in the event of a possible war.

It was Marie Feodorovna—as the Princess Dagmar was styled after her marriage—who gave this unity of purpose its motive power. She

had greater ability and energy than her brothers or sisters, and, above all, a free field in which to exercise them.

"She was a charmer in the widest sense of the word," says Vasili, whose knowledge of the Court of Russia was intimate. "Her charm was quite indescribable. It exercised a fascination to which it was impossible not to succumb. Her lovely smile, the gentle look in her eyes—those great, luminous eyes that seemed to read into one's soul—brought more friends to her husband than years of effort would have done."

Though indifferent to her at first, the Czar grew to love her devotedly. Her influence over him was enormous, yet few ever guessed it, so closely did she hide it from the world. She seemed incapable of the merest semblance of intrigue, and only to care for amusement. At her small receptions, to which only those with whom she was most intimate were invited, the Danish Minister was the only foreign diplomatist to be seen.

From the moment, however, she ascended the throne she sought to detach Russia from Germany. This was no easy task. Alexander III was by nature a firm believer in autocracy. The assassination of his father, and the frequent attempts on his own life, which in the end shattered his iron nerves, only served to strengthen this conviction. The Liberalism of Western Europe was utterly abhorrent to him. Though anti-German, he was fully aware that he, his dynasty, and all the interests of the House of Romanoff, had far more to gain from an alliance with Germany than with England or France.

Nevertheless, the Empress Marie's efforts never slackened. She hated Prussia whole-heartedly, hated it for tearing Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark and afterwards absorbing, among other things, her grandfather's diminutive Landgraviate of Hesse-Cassel when forming the Rhenish Province; and this hate was intensified by a fear lest Russia, through her enemy, should be drawn into a war with England, whereby a barrier would be created between her and her beloved sister. This, too, the latter dreaded. National misunderstandings were powerless to sever or weaken the bond that united them—a bond that became stronger, if possible, with every annual meeting in the ever fondly loved home.

Nor was the Czar able to resist the charm of those delightful family reunions in Denmark, where, without losing an atom of majesty, he could experience the purest joys of life. For his wife's sister he had the greatest admiration and affection. When he lay stricken at Livadia past all hope of recovery, the Princess of Wales was the first person to be informed. Accompanied by the Prince, she started immediately for the Crimea. It was a race with death. At some station on the journey, during which she was met by her sister, the Duchess of Cumberland, the news was broken to her that the Czar had died. The thought of her coming, however, had cheered the dying autocrat. "She will be a comfort to Marie," he said. One of his last acts was to write her a line of farewell.

As for the Empress, as soon as she saw her sister, her composure gave way; for the first

time she seemed to realise the full extent of her terrible misfortune.

Though an alliance between their respective countries had been impossible during the Czar's life-time, the devotion of the sisters had not been without political results. By seeking to dissipate, each in her separate sphere, every misunderstanding that arose between England and Russia, they had helped to preserve amity, while undermining in their annual family reunions the League of the Three Emperors. When Alexander III died the alliance between Russia and Germany was at an end.

His death was a crushing blow to the Empress's hopes. Affection and ambition alike seemed buried in his grave. At the wedding of her son, Nicholas II, which took place three weeks after Alexander's death, her eyes were red with weeping and her whole appearance was that of complete dejection. The presence of her parents, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and all the House of Glucksburg failed to console her. "Her father, on whose arm she leant," said one who was present, "in vain did his best to comfort her. It was a touching sight to see this old man tenderly trying to sustain her."

When, however, the first shock of grief had passed her ambition reasserted itself with renewed vigour. The difficulties she had to contend against now were greater than before. The prospect of any *rapprochement* between Russia and England seemed more remote than ever. In England the great expansion of Russia in Asia during the reign of Alexander III had created suspicion as to her intentions in regard to India, which the Franco-

Russian alliance increased. England could not understand this sudden friendly attitude of Czarist Russia to republican France, between whose Government and the British the relations at this time were far from cordial. Furthermore, in England, whose democratic spirit was becoming more and more Radical, there was no desire for an understanding with the Russian autocracy. Even when the alliance was eventually effected many years later, it was regarded by a large section of the people as a "betrayal of principle."

The English objections, however, were just the sort which it is the business of diplomacy to remove. To the "Angel of Russia," as Alexander III had called the Empress Marie, the Russian difficulties she had to surmount appeared much greater. Though Germany had become unpopular in Russia, the German influence at Court was still very powerful. Several of the Grand Duchesses were German. More significant still, the Czarina herself was a German. The relations between the Empress Marie and her daughter-in-law were strained from the start. Considering the Czarina's German birth and connections, and the deductions to be drawn from them, one wonders how so clever a woman as the Empress consented to her son's choice of a consort, which she had it in her power to control, particularly as she knew, from her own experience, the influence it was possible for a wife to acquire over her husband.

Though she had brought up her son to rely on her from infancy, none knew better than herself his weak and vacillating character. She did not at first fear that the Czarina might acquire an

ascendancy over Nicholas II, which would oppose her schemes, so much as the loss of her own influence over him.

To preserve this, and to turn it to account, was her sole preoccupation. Her attitude to the Czarina was one of studied indifference rather than hostility. The position of the young Empress was not an enviable one. Ignorant of the language and the customs of the country to which she had come, she was unable to adapt herself to her new surroundings. Too proud to seek popularity, she resented the adverse criticism to which her shy and reserved nature exposed her. By tactlessness, which was mistaken for arrogance, she turned possible sympathisers into enemies. Her failure to supply the Throne with an heir still further increased her mortification. Unhappy and ailing, she became a prey to a morbid melancholy, and lived isolated and a stranger in the midst of the glittering Court in which she should have been at once supreme and honoured.

In the meantime the influence of the Empress Marie over her son was strengthened by the mere contrast of her popularity with her daughter-in-law's insignificance. It was she who reigned, whom all courted, and to whom Nicholas himself, devoted son that he was, turned for sympathy and advice. How great this influence was none knew better than the unfortunate Czarina. During the Russo-Japanese War she drew a caricature of her husband in bib and tucker seated in a high-legged chair, while his mother fed him. "He would not go against his mother in anything she wanted," says Vasili.

Yet the Czar was by no means indifferent to his wife, whom he had married for love. Even in the Court of Russia domesticity had become a characteristic of royalty. Nicholas II was essentially a "family man," and after the birth of the Czarevitch his affection for his wife increased. As the mother of the Heir to the Throne her whole position was changed. She, too, changed. Her nature seemed to have been transformed by the birth of her son. Her timidity and nervousness vanished. Joy took the place of the former melancholy. With her boy ambition was born. She was no longer to be treated as a creature of no consequence, and proudly asserted herself.

It has been said by those behind the scenes at the Russian Court that, if the Empress Marie had adopted a different attitude to the Czarina, she would have found in her daughter-in-law a powerful support instead of an obstacle. The Anglo-Russian Alliance—the dream of the Empress's life, and which, in spite of the greatest obstacles to its achievement, she finally realised—was not opposed by the Czarina. On the contrary, she too desired it. Brought up under the eye of her grandmother, Queen Victoria, whom she venerated, imbued with English ideas, and speaking English in preference to any other language, her sympathies, though she was born in Germany, were with her mother's family. It was not till the defeat and demoralisation of Russia during the Great War threatened to destroy the State and engulf her throne and family in the general ruin, as they eventually did, that the epithet "pro-German" could with any reason be applied to her.

In the final struggle with the Empress Marie for the possession of the vacillating will of the Czar, who was to both the fount of power, her aim was to save the Throne for her son. The Empress's was to avoid the crowning humiliation of bending the knee to the enemy she had successfully defied all her life. In this furious duel the strength and weakness of the characters of both revealed themselves. At bay, the Czarina was for peace at any price. The Empress Marie preferred to go down in the wreck.

If the gesture of the Czarina calls for pity, then that of the Empress excites admiration. The unyielding spirit she showed before the final crash profoundly influenced the Czar. It explains why the political and diplomatic obstacles to the Anglo-Russian alliance, which without her active help could not have been effected, were finally surmounted. It was with her that the idea originated, years before the influences which were generated by the annual reunions of the British and Russian Royal Families in Denmark were strong enough to render it possible. It was the direct result of those meetings. They were the soil, prepared by sisterly affection, in which the seed was sown. The harvest, long in coming to fruition, was garnered by England.

In the drama of politics, whether national or international, personality always plays the principal rôle. The "plot" of the Anglo-Russian Alliance is the story of a debt that democracy owes to royalty.

Notes

CHAPTER VII

THE QUEEN AND SOCIETY

I. QUEEN VICTORIA'S COURT BEFORE AND AFTER THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT—THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF A COURT TO A MONARCHY II. THE SECLUSION OF THE QUEEN—THE PUBLIC RESENTMENT—THE QUEEN'S REMARKABLE PROTEST—ITS VINDICATION. III. THE PRINCE OF WALES BECOMES THE QUEEN'S REPRESENTATIVE IN SOCIETY—HIS QUALIFICATION FOR THE RÔLE—THE BRILLIANT REVIVAL OF THE LONDON SEASON—THE PRINCESS OF WALES'S FIRST DRAWING-ROOM—THE GUILDHALL BALL—THE POMP OF DEMOCRACY—CURIOSITY TO SEE THE PRINCESS—MOBBED—THE ROYAL VISIT TO OXFORD—WILD ENTHUSIASM OF THE STUDENTS—THE SPLENDOUR OF THE GUARDS' BALL—THE PRINCESS AT THE OPERA—ELECTRIC EFFECT OF HER ENTRY ON THE AUDIENCE. IV. EUROPEAN SOCIETY—THE COURT OF THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE—THE SECRET OF ITS PRESTIGE—EFFECT OF THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR ON ENGLISH SOCIETY—THE COURT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES—ITS COSMOPOLITAN CHARACTER—IMMENSE INFLUENCE OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES—THE LONDON SEASON BECOMES AN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION V. THE GRADUAL TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY UNDER DEMOCRACY—THE DECAY OF VICTORIAN MORALS—THE GOOD INFLUENCE OF THE PRINCESS OF WALES—WHAT THE MONARCHY AND THE NATION OWE TO HER.

I

FROM her marriage in 1840 to the death of the Prince Consort in 1861, the Court of Queen Victoria was the most brilliant in Europe. This is not saying much, for the atmosphere of conscious dignity which pervaded the European Courts of the period was not that usually associated with brilliancy. Royalty everywhere was too busy assimilating itself to the democratic conception of its use in the new order of things to give any special lustre to Society. Life generally bore the stamp of the triumphant *bourgeois* ideal, of which brilliancy and all that it implies

is not a characteristic. On the Continent the *haute bourgeoisie*, or aristocratised middle class, into which the *bourgeois* regime was ultimately to degenerate, had not yet evolved itself.

In England, however, where an almost total absence of foreign competition in trade had enriched the country in a manner never before paralleled in its history, a plutocracy was being rapidly formed. The Court of Queen Victoria, with its heavy magnificence and solemn stateliness, was perfectly adapted to the social ideas and requirements of the age. It was such a Court as one might expect to find in a monarchy that had unconsciously acquired the character of a democracy, at once parvenu and puritan, by the grace of which it existed.

During the life-time of the Prince Consort the English Court was the scene of many splendid functions. Most of the European sovereigns paid state visits to England, and on each occasion were received with great pomp. The Court ceremonies generally were conducted on a scale of great magnificence. At Court banquets, which were frequent, covers were laid for from five to six hundred persons, and the famous gold plate was always used. The Queen also gave several garden-parties and balls during the season at Buckingham Palace and Windsor. The balls were usually fancy dress affairs, a form of amusement much in vogue. A special period was chosen for representation; this was indicated on the card of command, and the recipient was requested to conform to it. On these occasions the Prince Consort, who liked to revive in this way the most famous periods in

history, appeared crowned at Victoria's side. This afforded the Queen the satisfaction of having her revenge, for an evening at least, on the House of Lords for refusing to let him reign with her as Philip of Spain had done with Queen Mary Tudor.

She found great enjoyment in these balls, in which she and her husband impersonated the greatest personages of the past. And Society, which always follows the lead of a Court, also acquired a taste for them. In those days, young, happy, and in love with a husband who adored her, life was like the realisation of some wonderful dream to Victoria. She was a fine horse-woman, and was fond of riding in Windsor Forest accompanied by thirty or forty people. Mounted on her superb bay Emperor, she was the life and soul of these equestrian jaunts. Pleasure appealed to her. She was constantly seen at the opera and the play. For dramatic performances at Court she had a special liking. The *réclame* of these performances was sufficient to ensure the success of the piece when acted in London. In the theatrical profession a "command" performance was regarded as tantamount to a public recognition of talent. The Court thus, in sundry ways, as a great Court should, helped to create and reflect public opinion in a manner that enhanced the prestige of royalty.

With the death of the Prince Consort all this was suddenly changed. A simplicity of the most monotonous description took the place of the former splendour. The Court was still expensive; certain indispensable formalities continued to be observed, certain ceremonies to be

performed ; but it ceased to be brilliant. Its only luxury was the grief in which the broken-hearted Queen indulged to the exclusion, at first, even of the business of the State.

For five years she lived in the strictest seclusion. When she emerged from it her Court was the mere skeleton of what it had been. The atmosphere of the grave in which she had buried her happiness and youth enveloped it. She was always dressed in mourning and surrounded by elderly ladies and gentlemen similarly attired. In close and constant application to state affairs she sought forgetfulness. As pleasure reminded her too bitterly of all she had lost, she banished it from the routine of the Court. There were no longer balls, concerts, and dramatic performances as of yore. Even at the Drawing-rooms she delegated to others the duty of receiving in her name those entitled to the honour of presentation to the Sovereign. Gone were the gay cavalcades in Windsor Forest in which she had once delighted. No fiery Emperor now did she ride ; instead, a little pony drew her about the grounds of her castles in a chaise.

Formerly she had delighted to receive the visits of reigning sovereigns ; now those to whom she extended hospitality were chiefly discrowned. Royal exiles could always count on her sympathy. It afforded her a sort of morbid solace to mingle her sorrow with theirs. Her visit of condolence to the Empress Eugénie on the death of the Prince Imperial was a pageant of woe. The great homes of the aristocracy which she had been accustomed to honour with her presence

knew her no more. When she went abroad it was on some errand of mercy to the cottages of the poor.

Before her time the life of the Court had been dissolute. With her it had become exemplary. Now one died of *ennui* in it. She gave dinners now and then, as if to remind the Court that it still existed; but they were so boring that nothing was dreaded so much as an invitation to them. Smoking was strictly forbidden in her palaces when she was in residence.

Always a stickler for etiquette and propriety, she became more exacting in regard to their rigid enforcement. The Baroness de Bunsen relates that, having been invited by telegram to dine with the Queen when she had a bad cold, she had "to employ no little skill to conceal a real handkerchief in the little lace substitute that was *de rigueur* on these occasions." To the innovations of fashion she had a rooted objection. When the Princess of Wales introduced the mode of wearing the hair on the forehead she expressed her disapproval to the ladies of her entourage who sought to imitate her. *Divorcées* she positively refused to countenance. No woman could be presented to her whose conduct was not irreproachable. Avoiding London as much as possible, and passing her secluded existence between Windsor, Balmoral, and Osborne, the Court of Queen Victoria practically ceased to function with the death of the Prince Consort.

In a monarchy a Court is a factor of paramount importance. Its origin is by no means due to the vanity of human nature, as so many, deceived

by its apparent futility, seem to think. In early times the Court was a Council in which the King consulted his chieftains on all matters of general interest to the State. The first courtiers were therefore counsellors or advisers, which, in spite of the immense transformation they have since undergone, they have never entirely ceased to be. Down to the French Revolution it was from the Court that the State was governed; and Cabinet Ministers even now, by virtue of their office, are still regarded as members of the Court. Of all the ceremonies of the Court, none are more important than those connected with state affairs.

It is, however, with the social and economic, rather than with the official or governmental, aspects of Courts that the average person is the more familiar. The Court has truly been called the "shopkeepers' barometer." By its brilliancy or dullness the prosperity or depression of trade, in the higher grades especially, can be forecast to a nicety. It is through the Court, too, that the personal influence of the Sovereign is strongest. The royal character is stamped on it as distinctly as the royal image on a coin. Thus, from the Court through the capital, from the capital through the whole country, there may flow forth a subtle all-pervading, all-corrupting example of frivolity and folly, of luxury and licence, corroding the mind and preparing the decay of a nation, or an exactly opposite example with exactly opposite effects, as the case may be.

The sudden suspension of the functions of such an institution which corresponds in an ever-increasing degree, as did the Court of Queen

Victoria, to national aspirations and requirements is a calamity. In England the morbid seclusion of the Queen, which was felt at once politically, socially, and economically, produced the effect of a moral liquidation, so to speak. Like the winding up of an old and prosperous business, it created a void which gave a sense of discomfort and uncertainty.

II

The bereavement of the Queen appealed strongly to popular sympathy; but after a decent period of mourning it was confidently expected that she would resume her place in the world as before. At first, so terrible was her grief, people feared for her reason; and, perhaps, had she occupied a private station in life, she might have gone mad. Fortunately the great mental strain was made tolerable by the necessity of attending personally to the multifarious affairs of a great Empire. Before three weeks had passed her ministers, between whom and herself the Princess Alice had acted as intermediary, were obliged to remind her that, as the Constitution made no exception for grief, the Sovereign was bound to communicate with them in person. But, though compelled to give her attention to the business of the country, she utterly refused to quit her seclusion, which for "the two dreadful first years of loneliness," as she expressed it, was complete.

Nothing proves more effectually the importance of the Court as an institution than the attitude of public opinion to her neglect of the most essential attributes of her position. When her seclusion

was felt to be unduly prolonged she was told openly by the Press that her retirement was contrary to the national interest. It was declared to be "a breach of duty to the public," and radicals and republicans, who disliked monarchical institutions, argued on public platforms that such a Court as hers was out of all proportion to its advantages.

The ceremony of opening Parliament in state was a function of the Court to which Cabinet Ministers attached the greatest importance, as it most significantly reminded the public of the Sovereign's place in the Constitution. But for five years the Queen refused to perform even this ceremony. As she was known to be in good health, her conduct was held to be not only unjustifiable, but to diminish the dignity of the Government.

This was bitterly resented by the public, and in 1864 her failure to open the new session of Parliament in person after it had been announced that she intended to do so, "to please her subjects," caused great indignation. The coarseness and violence with which she was assailed by a certain portion of the Press so alarmed Delane, the famous editor of the *Times*, that he deemed it advisable to warn her in his powerful organ "to encourage the hope that not only will Buckingham Palace resume its place in the world of life, but that Her Majesty will herself reappear as its mistress."

He reminded her that the living had their claims as well as the dead, none more imperative than those of the Society of one of the first European capitals; and that it was impossible for a

recluse to occupy the throne without weakening the importance of the monarchy. "For sake of the Crown as well as the public," he wrote, "we beseech Her Majesty to return to the personal exercise of her exalted functions. It may be that in time London may accustom itself to do without the palace, but it is not desirable that we should attain that point of republican simplicity."

In other words the Sovereign was practically given to understand, by the most influential organ in the country, that, if she wished to keep her throne and the affection of her people, she had better "go into Society."

The effect on the Queen was most characteristic. As a "cruelly misunderstood woman, whom the Press attacked in a heartless, cruel way," she determined to avail herself of the privilege which her subjects enjoyed and to write to the *Times* herself. The relation between democracy and royalty in England has been characterised by some very curious phenomena, but surely none is more astonishing than the spectacle of Queen Victoria being roundly abused by her subjects for not liking the pomps and vanities, and writing to the *Times* to protest!

A woman who could write, as the Queen did, to King Leopold after the Prince Consort's death—"I am anxious to repeat *one* thing, and that *one* is my *firm* resolve, my irrevocable decision, viz. that *his* wishes, *his* plans about everything, *his* views about everything, are to be my law! And no human power will make me swerve"—can be trusted to hold her own at all costs.

The Queen's reply to "calumny," as she expressed it, deserves to be quoted in full.

"An erroneous idea," she wrote, "seems generally to prevail, and has latterly found frequent expression in the newspapers, that the Queen is about to resume her place in Society which she occupied before her great affliction; that is, that she is about again to hold Levees and Drawing-rooms in person, and to appear as before at Court balls, concerts, etc. This idea cannot be too explicitly contradicted.

"The Queen heartily appreciates the desire of her subjects to see her, and whatever she *can* do to gratify them in this loyal and affectionate wish she *will* do. Whenever any real object is to be attained by her appearing on public occasions, any national interest to be promoted, or anything to be encouraged which is for the good of her people, Her Majesty will not shrink, as she has not shrank, from any personal sacrifice or exertion, however painful.

"But there are other and higher duties than those of mere representation which are now thrown upon the Queen, alone and unassisted—duties which she cannot neglect without injury to the public service, which weigh unceasingly upon her, overwhelming her with work and anxiety.

"The Queen has laboured conscientiously to discharge those duties till her health and strength, already shaken by the utter and ever-abiding desolation which has taken the place of her former happiness, have been seriously impaired.

"To call upon her to undergo, in addition, the

fatigue of those mere state ceremonies which can be equally well performed by other members of her family is to ask her to run the risk of entirely disabling herself for the discharge of those other duties which cannot be neglected without serious injury to the public interest.

“The Queen will, however, do what she can—in the manner least trying to her health, strength, and spirits—to meet the loyal wishes of her subjects, to afford that support and countenance to society, and to give that encouragement to trade which is desired of her.

“More the Queen *cannot* do, and more the kindness and good feeling of her people will surely not exact from her.”

This extraordinary outburst, which reveals the determined character of Victoria in every line, only added fuel to the flame. Radical as the middle classes were at this time, with wealth and liberty, they naturally hankered for those social pleasures and advantages that give prosperity its peculiar glamour. The attacks on the Queen continued. Even *Punch*, in a cartoon, portrayed the Queen as the statue of Hermione in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, while Britannia, as Paulina, addressed to her the words: “’Tis time; descend; be stone no more.”

The complete indifference of Victoria was exasperating; but after she finally condescended to emerge from her gloomy seclusion to open Parliament in state once more a reaction set in. Voices began to be raised in unexpected quarters in her defence. John Bright, hearing her denounced by a member of Parliament at a Liberal

meeting for "neglect of duty," eloquently defended her.

"I am not accustomed to stand up in defence of the possessors of crowns," he said, "but I think there has been, by many persons, a great injustice done to the Queen in reference to her desolate and widowed position; and I venture to say this, that a woman, be she the Queen of a great realm, or the wife of one of your labouring men, who can keep alive in her heart a great sorrow for the lost object of her life and affection is not at all likely to be wanting in a great and generous sympathy with you."

To the credit of human nature, it is worth recording that the effect on the meeting of the Radical orator's chivalrous defence was disastrous for the member of Parliament whose unseemly denunciation had instigated it. He was howled down when he tried to explain his words and hissed out of the hall.

In royal circles much sympathy was expressed for the Queen.

"Pauvre Victoire, ne la tourmentez pas," sighed King Leopold when reading of the way she was badgered to "resume her place in society."

The public, however, only ceased to worry her about "Court balls and concerts" when it managed to get what it hankered for from the Prince and Princess of Wales. An illness she had ten years after the Prince Consort's death afforded the Press, which had got the worst of the quarrel, an opportunity to make its *amende honorable*.

The Liberal *Daily News* (September 15, 1871)

expressed the feelings of the Press and the nation generally.

"This illness," it said, "has given the people a glimpse behind the purple, and has assured them that the reluctance of its wearer has been due to physical weakness and depression. There will, therefore, be only one feeling among the people to-day. They may have caught from a discontented Court a complaining spirit; they may have been induced to feel that the Queen was hardly giving proper splendour to her queenly position, and was showing some slackness in her queenly duties; but to-day all such complaints are hushed. *The nation is ashamed of them and rebukes itself for uttering them*, and feels nothing but an affectionate solicitude for her speedy recovery."

This *Peccavi*! obtained a characteristic pardon from the Queen. She wrote to Sir Theodore Martin as follows: "The Queen cannot help referring to the articles in the *Times* and *Daily News*, which are very gratifying, as these go the length of expressing *remorse* at the heartless, cruel way in which they had attacked the Queen."

She had said that "no human power would make her swerve," and she was true to her resolution. She won all along the line, and had the satisfaction of having the last word into the bargain.

The explanation of this singular episode in the life of Queen Victoria is simple enough. The Court and all it implied had become a national necessity. The English people clamoured for it precisely as the children of Israel had clamoured for a king.

III

The presence of the Sovereign, although the chief ornament of a Court, is not absolutely indispensable to the exercise of its functions. The Queen had frequently been urged to let the Prince of Wales take her place in Society. It was to him, as the newspapers had told her, that the nation naturally looked to give appropriate expression to its feelings. And the Queen, while steadfastly refusing to share her political responsibilities with her son, or to suffer him to transact any official business in her name, or even to instruct him in state affairs, was willing enough to delegate to him the rôle in the social life of the country which was so distasteful to her.

The part was one, as all the world knows, for which Edward VII was fitted by taste and temperament in an exceptional manner. And Fortune, whose favourite child he was, took care to give him every facility to perform it with a distinction *sans pareil*.

Under any circumstances the Prince and Princess of Wales, by virtue of their rank alone, would have been recognised as the natural representatives of the Queen in the discharge of the social functions of the Sovereign. But when, to their rank, was added every quality that can be desired in the leadership of Society it was not long before public opinion, disregarding the Queen entirely in this matter, turned to them on their own account for a Court.¹

¹ The Danes had raised, by popular subscription, 100,000 kroner as a dowry for the Princess, though none had been expected

The immediate result of their marriage was the revival of the London Season with a brilliancy it had never before possessed. After a nine days' honeymoon at Osborne the royal pair returned to London and held an "evening reception" at St. James's Palace. On all present the affability and dignity of the Prince and the grace and beauty of the Princess made a profound impression. It was felt instinctively that a new regime was being inaugurated. The distinction of the company, which included all the foreign Princes and Princesses who had come to England for the wedding, and the whole Corps Diplomatique; the etiquette observed, at once formal and picturesque; the beautiful old palace, ablaze with thousands of wax lights, jewels, decorations, uniforms, Court dresses, and the magnificent gold plate on a crimson background displayed at one end of the banqueting-hall,—with the peculiar gaiety that reigned,—made a scene very different from those associated with the heavy state of former Victorian Courts.

or demanded in England. In the marriage treaty concluded between Queen Victoria and Frederick VII, it was stipulated that the Princess should receive, as a marriage settlement, an annual income of £10,000, to be paid half-yearly. It was also arranged that, in case she should have the misfortune to become a widow, this sum was to be increased to £30,000, to be paid quarterly. On the motion of Lord Palmerston, Parliament had voted that the Prince of Wales should receive an income of £40,000 a year, with £10,000 added for the Princess. If to this is added the revenue of the Duchy of Cornwall, the young couple would begin life on about £100,000 a year. This sum, great as it seems, was, however, none too much when one considers the manner in which they were expected to live, and the incessant calls of every description made upon them as the representatives of the nation.

This event was the precursor of a succession of social festivities such as English Society had not been accustomed to. It was like the awakening of spring after a dreary winter. There was a general feeling of gladness and buoyancy. Everywhere there were signs of rejuvenation. Mansions long closed once more threw open their doors, and people vied with one another in entertaining. Corporations and institutions caught the infection. London's example was followed throughout the country. It was as if the whole nation saw in this restoration of the forms and traditions of Society the fulfilment of its dearest desires.

The varied character of the outstanding events of this Season proves how closely the nation identified itself with the restoration of Society. The first Drawing-room held by the Princess of Wales on behalf of the Queen was attended by over two thousand ladies. The line of carriages stretched from Cavendish Square to St. James's Palace. Many people started at 9 o'clock in the morning and waited in their carriages till the palace doors were opened at 12. It took four hours for the company to pass the throne.

"The hustling and pressure were so great," says Lady St. Helier, "that many gowns were almost entirely destroyed before the wearers reached the presence-chamber where the Princess of Wales stood. *Punch* was extremely witty over it, and the sketches in which he depicted the scenes at the Drawing-room were no exaggeration."

Similar eagerness was displayed on the occasion when the Prince of Wales received the Freedom

of the City. In honour of this event the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London gave a grand ball in the Guildhall. This famous civic entertainment was a subject of town talk for weeks beforehand. It was not so much a ball as a pomp of democracy, which, in spite of its boasted simplicity, is prone to display. Fabulous sums, in the form of grants to charities, were offered for tickets. Everything connected with this event was on the most lavish scale. It was reputed to have cost the Corporation £20,000.

The rich interior of the palace of the City Fathers presented a scene that was most undemocratic. In the great Hall, on a dais covered with a rich carpet, stood the throne of the Prince and Princess. Above it rose the Prince's coronet and feathers, the latter nine feet long and executed in the finest spun glass, like drooping silver. The Council-chamber, where the supper was served, presented a truly grand and royal appearance. Its pretty lantern and tapering roof had been exquisitely gilded and decorated for the occasion, and from the four columns on which the dome rested hung large gilt baskets filled with flowers. The walls were covered with superb pieces of tapestry designed by Giulio Romano, depicting scenes from the lives of Scipio and Hannibal. One end of the chamber, filled with tall palms and ferns, was like a tropical garden in the centre of which a fountain cast a perfumed jet into the air. Opposite, the almost countless wealth of the wealthiest corporation the world has yet seen was displayed on a huge buffet, the whole wall to the ceiling being hidden by massive

gold plate, over which the statue of George III seemed to keep watch with outstretched arms.

Here, in glittering array, were salvers as large as baths ; quaint beakers and flagons formed like dragons, bears, and cocks ; tall old tapering cups of the time of the Tudors with pointed lids like spires ; salt-cellars as big as footstools, made in days when these ancient emblems of hospitality were really used to mark distinction as to rank, —the Court sitting above and the Livery below the salt. All the City Companies had placed their treasures at the service of the Lord Mayor for this occasion. Silver plate had been sent literally by the ton, but none but gold was allowed upon this magnificent buffet.

Beneath these towering trophies, accumulated through the centuries, was spread the table for the City's royal guests, in horseshoe form. This too, like the buffet, was covered with the finest specimens of the goldsmith's craft which the City possessed ; while from the ceiling hung the massive silver chandelier of the Fishmongers' Company, illumining the entire chamber with the soft light of innumerable wax candles.

An illuminated picture of Bernstorff, with the Princess standing on the lawn in front of her old home, very effectively placed and prepared as a pleasant surprise, gave a human touch to all this magnificence. The grace with which she acknowledged this unexpected compliment would have shaken the faith of the most confirmed republican.

"No wonder," remarked a wit, "that the worthy Aldermen flopped themselves about in

an agony of delight, and basked in her smiles like their own turtles in the sun."

As usual, the fascination she exercised was the topic of the evening. Dressed very simply in white satin, which heightened her diaphanous beauty, her principal ornament was the £10,000 diamond necklace, the wedding gift of the City of London. She appeared radiantly happy, and danced frequently throughout the evening.

Nothing marred the success of this festivity, which for splendour was unequalled in the annals of the Guildhall. Over two thousand people were present. Every room, every passage, was filled to overflowing. To see the Prince and Princess was the object of everyone, who, not content with one glimpse, would have gazed all night on the pair had it been possible. Wherever they stood, sat, ate, danced, or received the formal addresses of the evening the crush was suffocating.

The behaviour of the company was at least courteous. This was not always the case. At the Horticultural Show, where the ticket of admission was only five shillings, the crowd which came only to see the Princess gratified their curiosity totally regardless of ordinary politeness, pressing round her so that she could with difficulty move, and staring rudely into her face.

The visit of the royal pair to Oxford for Commemoration, when the honorary degree of D.C.L. was conferred on the Prince of Wales, proved too, in its way, how the presence of royalty added to the pleasure of every important social function, how essential it was that the Sovereign should recognise the fact.

The Prince and Princess were assured of a warm welcome, but the ovation they received astonished even those who prepared it.

An undergraduate thus described their entry into Oxford :

“ Commemoration Day ! Quotha ! No ! Umbrella Day ! It has been the day of umbrellas and persistent rain. Various showers throughout the morning showed the unkindly disposition of the weather, but its downpour was reserved until the precise time when the Prince and Princess were proceeding up the High Street. A few minutes after the Vice-Chancellor and the most distinguished members of the University arrived at Magdalen Bridge, where the address of welcome was to be presented, the royal cortège appeared.

“ There was a momentary pause in order to open the carriage containing the Prince and Princess, which had necessarily been closed. At this moment a mishap occurred which completely ruined the whole effect of the royal entry into the city. Instead of the volunteers or police, or both, keeping back the crowd, King Mob was permitted to break through every opposition and to crowd round the Bishops and Dons in the most confusing manner. An utterly unseemly, and, at the same time, ludicrous scene followed, the humorous effect of which was certainly improved by the rain, which came down with a pour and compelled everyone who possessed an umbrella to hoist sail.

“ You must imagine to yourself Archbishops and Bishops in their lawn sleeves, scarlet robes, and most dignified attire ; Heads of Houses in

scarlet and black velvet sleeves ; Doctors in Pink ; Doctors in White ; D.C.L.'s., and M.A.'s., *ad lib.* You must picture them hemmed in, jostled, pushed, and pinned against the sides of the royal carriage by an unruly, shouting, bawling, hurrahing, but very good-natured and loyal mob—and all this in the middle of a bridge, outlined by umbrellas, while the rain fairly pelted down, and did its best to spoil the beautiful white bonnet of the Princess."

Undergraduate ardour, however, was not damped by the weather. For three hours before the degrees were to be conferred the Sheldonian Theatre was "packed like the Black Hole of Calcutta." When at last the Princess appeared, in all the radiance of her beauty, she was greeted with such an outburst of cheering as could only be produced by the combination of lungs and loyalty in their most perfect development.

It seemed as if she were destined to stand in front of her elevated chair of state, beaming and bowing for ever. Vain was it for her to think of sitting. The sound of cheering outside the theatre swelled the volume of that within, and prolonged the storm of applause with which the Princess was welcomed. Having cheered her to the top of their bent, the students proceeded to cheer her family in turn, with special stress upon her brother the King of Greece. Fully ten minutes elapsed before she was permitted to take her seat.

The same scenes were repeated the following day. During the races on the river the Balliol boat was deliberately upset in front of the royal barge, while the crew up to their waists in water cheered the Princess.

The ball given by the Brigade of Guards with which the festivities of this unusual Season terminated was the salute of the aristocracy to the Prince and Princess of Wales. Invitations were not to be bought, as at the democratic Guildhall ball, at any price. The two thousand persons present were the *crème de la crème* of English Society. The Picture Gallery of the National Exhibition, then being held in Cromwell Road, was chosen as the scene of this function, and neither pains nor money were spared to ensure its success. As the City Companies had lent their plate to embellish the Guildhall, so the nobility lent theirs to the Guards for the occasion. Its value was estimated at two millions sterling.

Such a display of luxury and splendour had never before been seen in England. It was described as "a spectacle that vied in gorgeousness with anything that had been recorded of the feasts of the Roman patricians." As usual, the Princess in white and glittering with emeralds and diamonds, was the bright, particular star. Nothing could surpass the charm of her smile and the grace of her manner during the entire evening.

Here, too, in spite of their high breeding, people were with difficulty prevented from crowding to feast their eyes on the royal pair. They seemed to have established such kindly relations with all present that even the severest rules of etiquette could not check the outbursts of loyalty as they withdrew.

At the gala performance at the Italian Opera in honour of their marriage, to which the Prince

and Princess went in state, the enthusiasm was unbounded. As the Princess took her seat in the royal box the "whole house rose at the sight of this lovely vision and cheered itself hoarse."

All these scenes of splendour and enthusiasm, hitherto unfamiliar and foreign to English custom, which characterised this brilliant Season are not to be attributed merely to the popularity of the Prince and Princess, nor to any special desire to pay homage to royalty. They were, in reality, the precursor of a new social era in England. Their real significance is to be found in the conscious pride of the nation which demanded recognition commensurate with its ever-increasing prosperity and prestige.

IV

The death of the Prince Consort, attended as it was by the retirement of Queen Victoria from active participation in the social life of the country, marks not only the close of a period in her reign, but also coincides roughly with the end of a stage in the century itself. With prosperity due to orderly government there had come, as invariably happens, a reaction. Already in France the change was manifest. There the pomp of the Second Empire gratified the self-same plutocratic desires that the commercialised middle classes had begun to express in England.

The character of the new social life of which the Prince and Princess of Wales were the centre

was very similar to that which had formed round Napoleon III and Eugénie. The joy of living was the basis of both. This was something more than the frivolous caprice of an idle, pleasure-loving society. In the period in which it manifested itself it was a national requirement. If the happiness of the people is, or should be, the chief object of good government, the lighter side of national life is just as important as the serious. It was the failure to realise this which made Queen Victoria's seclusion so intensely unpopular and ended in the subversion by the people themselves of the dour and dreary principles on which the whole fabric of nineteenth-century society was based.

It is customary to speak of the "tinsel glories" of the Second Empire. The disaster in which it ended gives an appearance of truth to this reproach which is otherwise unjustified. While it lasted its prestige was supreme, and suffered no abatement till it vanished completely as suddenly as it had arisen. During its existence the Court of the Empress Eugénie was not only French but European. If its brilliancy was "tinsel," so was that of every Court and the Society of every country in Europe. Its influence was felt everywhere. The Tuileries was the lode-star of Fashion, Paris the hub of pleasure. And this influence was paramount not because of its superior refinement and culture, like that of the Court of Louis XIV, but because, like that of Marie Antoinette, its gladness and splendour gave expression to what people everywhere were hungering for, and gave it in the most graceful manner possible.

The want the Court of the Tuileries had satisfied in European society was too imperative to be extinguished by the Franco-Prussian War. Democracy, whose tastes in the course of the century, from being those of a *petit bourgeois* became those of a *parvenu*, required a substitute. It found this ready to hand in the "Marlborough House set." The sceptre of Society passed from Paris to London, the mantle of Fashion fell upon the Prince of Wales. The Edwardian era practically began with the Flight of the Empress.

The supremacy of the new English Court, like that of its French predecessor, was based on the chief characteristic of the age—the trend towards internationalism, democracy's great ideal. The Court of the Tuileries had been exotic, that of the Prince of Wales was cosmopolitan. The difference was chiefly one of leadership.

The real defect of Eugénie's Court was that it did not sufficiently represent the French nation. Though it had every quality that could charm the senses, its pageants were never wholly popular. It divided rather than united the country. The enemies of the Empire could not forgive it its origin. Royalists and Republicans alike avoided the Tuileries, and the Empress did nothing to win them. She was essentially a leader of Fashion, and when she aspired to direct the policy of the State she became merely the leader of a political party.

The Prince of Wales had the benefit of the Empress's mistakes, and was fortunately able to take advantage of them. Thanks to his rigid exclusion from politics and the versatility of his

interests, he identified himself with the entire life of the nation, and not with that of any one class or party. Amiable and ungrudging of his time and trouble, he was to be seen all the year round journeying hither and thither, laying foundation-stones, opening bridges, hospitals, etc. Imbued with the joy of living, he carried its incentive everywhere. Such men naturally take the lead. Though his mother jealously retained the prerogatives of royalty, he assumed its obligations and exercised its influence.

Without seeking to impose his tastes or ideas upon anybody, his ascendancy was such that they were adopted as a matter of course. The cut of his clothes was pronounced impeccable; his gloves, his ties, his hats were servilely copied. Arbiter of etiquette as well as of fashion, his least opinion had the force of a decree.

Picture this influence directed to philanthropy and matters of public utility, and one can realise how valuable his patronage was. He had but to advocate a plan for it at once to become a necessity. Societies and institutions of all descriptions—intellectual, scientific, industrial, charitable, religious—solicited his aid. Those to which he gave his patronage always prospered. A steady stream of gold inundated all he undertook.

In all this he was ably assisted by his wife. The *cachet* of her patronage was no less eagerly sought. To imitate her was the height of *bon ton*. Even her very defects were copied. Temporarily lamed by an attack of rheumatism, she was obliged to use a cane in walking. At once canes

became the rage, and for three months all Society cultivated the "Alexandra limp."

The interest she excited was unbounded. Her mere presence gave an indescribable *éclat* to every public or social gathering. It was sufficient to announce that the Princess of Wales would be present somewhere for the world to flock there. Crowds stood in the Park all the afternoon waiting to catch a glimpse of her ever-girlish face as she passed. An unexpected visit she paid to a slum had the effect of turning a Socialist meeting into a demonstration of loyalty.

There was a strange thrill in her charm, a quickening of the pulses, a sense of elevation, a sort of mental and moral uplift. Under the spell of her sympathetic smile one felt capable of achieving incredible things for her sake. Foreigners, amazed at such infatuation, declared that all England had fallen in love with the Princess of Wales.

Mere popularity is too banal and evanescent to explain this fascination. The attraction of the Princess was permanent. It endured because it was a part of the personality from which it emanated.

V

The manner in which the Prince of Wales performed the duties his mother delegated to him easily silenced hostile criticism. Much is condoned in a prince to whom a nation owes so many solid advantages. The lead he gave was the lead that the nation and the age alike indicated. He was not so much a leader as a representative.

Insensibly, outworn conventions disappeared and barriers were thrown down. The aristocracy, which had formerly rigidly excluded the rich middle classes and the Jews, was now composed of both. Few prejudices survived the contact. Having ceased to demand "Who are you?" as it had done at the beginning of the century, Society soon forgot to ask, "What are you worth?" and by the end of the century only inquired, "Can you amuse us?" The answer came from every quarter of the globe. The London Season thus became an international institution.

How far this transformation of English Society was due to the retirement of Queen Victoria is a moot point. Undoubtedly it accelerated the change, but it was not the only cause. The incentive already existed before her time. It can be traced in the prudery which passed for virtue that characterised the rise of democracy to power. It was the temptation of pleasure that gave such strength to the indignation excited by the morals, or lack of morals, of the Regency. In those days this temptation proceeded from the Court, and thereby gave an additional stimulus to the prevailing revolutionary ideas. These were religious as well as political, and were only to be effectively opposed by a powerful moral example, which, if the monarchy was to be maintained, must be set by the Court.

It was with this object in view that Queen Victoria took such care in choosing a wife for her heir. She was, however, too puritanical herself not to be in complete sympathy with the

stern moral code of Early Victorian England. Not only did she rigidly support public opinion in this matter, but even opposed it when, wearying of its attitude, which was based on political antipathy rather than on real spiritual conviction, it attempted to lower its standard.

In making morality the talisman of the monarchical principle she displayed a remarkable understanding of the English character. To English ears this word has a Mosaic significance. It symbolises the "Law and the Prophets," and implies a belief in punishment as essential to justice. It is at once a threat and a challenge. With Morality inscribed on your banner you can make Evil appear Good. To analyse it, to question it, is a sort of sacrilege. Many a sham virtue has concealed itself under its mask. That is why in England, more than in other countries, the innocent are so often made to suffer for the guilty.

But Morality merely penalises without checking. In itself it is no deterrent. It was powerless to check the laxity with which public opinion viewed the transition of the *bourgeois* simplicity of the Early Victorian era into the plutocratic ostentation of the Later Victorian period. In this transition little was required to turn licence into corruption.

It is just here that one realises how powerful was the influence that the Princess of Wales exerted on the brilliant cosmopolitan Society over which she and her husband presided for so many years. This influence was quite silent, and devoid of any suggestion of the severity that made the

old Queen's example seem like a perpetual rebuke. It consisted solely in the irresistible appeal of sympathetic and unaffected goodness.

That, coming as she did to England young and inexperienced, she should have remained unspoilt by all the flattery with which she was continually censed is remarkable. But if she kept a level head it certainly did not arise from insensibility. The natural goodness of her heart was well fortified by good sense. "She has a look of great intelligence beyond that of a merely pretty girl," wrote Lady Waterford, a critical observer, on seeing her for the first time. Charles Dickens also remarked this quality. Indeed, at her wedding it was the general impression that "the intelligence of her expression was as striking as the beauty of her features."

When complimented on the wonderful reception she had received on her arrival in London she replied, "Yes, it was all very splendid. But it was for the sake of the Queen and the Prince of Wales. The English people do not know me yet—they have to learn."

The answer implied that she meant to win their love for herself. This desire to be loved was inherent in her. It is related of her that, being asked once, when a little girl, what she would like most, she had replied simply, "To be loved."

Considering the trend of the times after she came to England, there is much to indicate that, had she been other than she was, both the Court and the nation itself would have yielded to the insidious temptations that beset luxurious civili-

sations. It is the quality of such natures as hers to purify those they influence. The credit is due to her in no small measure not only that she gave dignity to a particularly splendid and luxurious Court, but that she kept its fame untarnished.

Chosen to save the Throne from the peril of another Regency, she saved both the monarchy and the people from that fate.

CHAPTER VIII

THE QUEEN AND THE PEOPLE

I. THE MANIFOLD DUTIES OF ROYALTY—THEIR FATIGUE—THEIR COMPENSATION—POLITICAL VALUE OF ROYAL VISITS—THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES IN IRELAND—EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS OF THEIR IRISH VISITS—FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT. II. THE VISIT OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS TO BIRMINGHAM—THE ULTRA-RADICAL MAYOR—DOUBTS AS TO THE WISDOM OF THE VISIT—THE CHARM OF THE PRINCESS—ITS EFFECT ON THE POPULACE—THE WARMTH OF THE MAYOR'S WELCOME—*PUNCH'S* CARTOON—THE PRINCESS TRIMS THE CLAWS OF THE LION—REMARKABLE RESULT OF THE VISIT. III. THE VALUE OF THE QUALITY OF MERCY—THE RIGHT OF PERSONAL APPEAL TO THE SOVEREIGN—THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO IT IN FORMER TIMES—ITS RESTRICTION—THE DEMOCRATIC SUBSTITUTE—ITS CALLOUSNESS—WHAT THE PEOPLE HAVE LOST—THE SYMPATHY OF ROYALTY FOR THE PEOPLE—IMMENSE IMPORTANCE OF ROYAL PATRONAGE—QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S PHILANTHROPIC WORK—WHAT THE NURSING PROFESSION OWES TO HER—IMPORTANCE AND APPRECIATION OF HER INTEREST IN THE WORK OF THE HOSPITALS—HER GENEROSITY AND KEEN SENSE OF PITY. IV. THE QUEEN'S HORROR OF CRUELTY—HER LOVE OF ANIMALS—HER COURAGE AND COOLNESS IN THE FACE OF DANGER. V. THE QUEEN AS A MUSICIAN—HER LOVE OF MUSIC AND APPRECIATION OF MUSICAL GENIUS—HER PATRONAGE OF THE OPERA—WHAT THE MUSICAL PROFESSION IN ENGLAND OWES TO HER—THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MUSIC CONFERRED ON THE QUEEN.

I

IN these modern days, when a king is regarded as the chief servant of a State, royalty obviously implies service. What were once royal favours are now royal duties. These may be classified roughly as official and unofficial.

The former are entirely ceremonial, and are concerned with all that appertains to the maintenance of the dignity of the State at home or its prestige abroad. The latter are utilitarian, and include everything which, by the exercise of royal patronage, or the presence of the sovereign

or his representatives, tends to the financial and social advantage of the people.

To discharge them conscientiously—and it is on their conscientious discharge that royalty's existence in a modern democratic State mainly depends—it is as necessary to pay as much attention to the laying of a foundation-stone or the opening of a bazaar as to the reception of a foreign guest or some equally and purely ceremonial function.

Nor is conscientiousness all that is required. In an article on the Silver Wedding of the Prince of Wales the writer thus sums up what had been expected of him :

“ A multitude of social duties which none but a strong man could have borne, and none but a man of genial temper and admirable business capacity could have performed without much friction ; to travel here and there to lay foundation-stones, or open public buildings, and to preside at innumerable public meetings ; to distribute the valuable favour of his patronage with unflinching discretion ; to take his share, and not more than his share, in the pleasures of Society ; and to do all this in the right way year after year with self-possession and without self-consciousness, with just enough and not too much assertion of authority,—this has been the problem of the Prince of Wales's public life.

“ That he has been able to achieve all this is due to his ever-fresh interest in life, and his power of looking and seeming always happiest in the particular thing he had to do.”

To those, however, who do not possess his

exceptional qualifications the similarity of these duties, to which little personal interest is attached, and the frequency with which they recur, are calculated to render their discharge not only extremely irksome but to blight all sense of individuality.

Queen Victoria, to whom they were all equally boring, frankly refused to endure their fatigue. Many, indeed, often wonder how royalty can be induced to perform them at all. In former times they would not have been tolerated. One cannot imagine Louis XIV, for instance, putting himself to the slightest inconvenience to open a public building or even to honour with his presence the table of a great nobleman. Fouquet and Madame de Maintenon were the only persons whose hospitality he condescended to accept in the course of his reign. The former was his chief minister and the latter his wife. The royal presence in those days was jealously guarded, and the patronage of kings, when obtained, was conferred by royal decree.

But, however tiresome laying foundation-stones, presiding at public meetings, and other similar things may seem to ordinary mortals, they are not without their compensations. Very few will deny that the steps of a throne are on the whole an enviable place. There is a fascination about a princely life that counteracts its wear and tear. Royal personages have one experience of life that is peculiarly their own—they get the best of everything. It would be curious to know the effect on their minds of this. For lesser people the “best” is but a piecemeal acquisition. Here

and there they may secure the coveted thing—pictures, gems, horses, or some other item in the inventory of the pride of life. But royal personages can only by accident know what it is to have the “second best,” and thus to a certain extent miss the pleasure of a slowly satisfied desire.

There is, too, in the very glamour of royalty a subtle flattery that few can withstand. The London correspondent of a provincial paper, in describing a Court ball given by the Prince and Princess of Wales during the Season of 1891, said :

“So irresistible and unfailing is the attractive power of royalty that, though the vast majority of those who attended the ball had attended it all their lives, they still crowded into the dancing-room with as much eagerness as if they had never entered it before. This was not for the sake of the dancing, for not more than two or three sets of lancers go on at once, and the space for waltzing is proportionately limited. To gaze at the Royalties as they sit on the dais, or *pirouette* in front of it, was the supreme and satisfying object of universal effort.”

Such a power denotes influence. The duties of royalty possess all the attributes of propaganda. Even the laying of a foundation-stone may exercise a powerful effect on the imagination. The political value of such an influence is evident, and Governments continually seek to turn it to advantage. Royal visits are the means usually employed to obtain this end.

It was with the object of effecting a reconciliation between England and Ireland, and not

from any personal motive, that the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Ireland together for the first time in 1868. If this reconciliation had depended only on the "irresistible and unfailing power of royalty" it would unquestionably have been brought about on this occasion. Not since the Union had Ireland manifested such loyalty. The admiration aroused by the Princess, of whom so much had been heard, was the chief contributing factor.

The royal entry into Dublin was a scene of indescribable enthusiasm. At the special request of the Prince, no troops lined the route. This reliance on the chivalrous and hospitable spirit of the Irish was fully appreciated by the warm-hearted people, who, by their spontaneous recognition of what was due to their royal visitors, kept a passage clear for the cortège, "closing in behind as it passed like the sea in the wake of a ship that cleaves it."

In less than five minutes the Princess had passed her probation in popularity. The excitable crowds that on the night of her marriage, five years before, had rioted in the streets and pulled down the decorations in her honour now escorted her with shouts of joy. They rained blessings on her lovely face and called on all the saints to protect her as they ran beside her carriage. Heaven knows what "evils" they may have "touched" as her fingers were grasped by rugged hands! Two or three clinging to the sides of the carriage had their coat-tails torn off, but held on regardless, laughing and cheering, up to the gates of the Castle.

At Punchestown Races the arrival of the royal party was hailed by such a "shouting and rejoicing as were never heard even on Ascot Cup Day." Wherever she went the Princess was greeted with, "Harro for the Countess of Dublin!" "Sure, won't ye stay with us, or promise ye'll come back soon and stop for ever?"

It is worth noticing, as a curious and somewhat inexplicable fact, that there was never so little crime of any kind to call for the notice of the police as there was during this visit. Drunkenness disappeared from the streets, the night charges were almost *nil*. It seemed as if the whole people had entered into a compact with their consciences.

Who shall say what the effect might not have been on the susceptible Irish heart if the British Government had permitted royalty an unfettered use in Ireland of the prerogatives which it so jealously curtailed in England? Democracy, to realise its ideal, must sacrifice itself, like Christ! It is the only sure way.

On every subsequent occasion that the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Ireland, both before and after their Coronation, they were invariably greeted by the masses with the wildest enthusiasm, regardless of the political state of the country at the time. But, beyond establishing the personal popularity of the royal pair, the British Government accomplished nothing by their visits. It merely squandered the royal influence which it honestly and sincerely desired to profit by. The result is one which every spend-thrift achieves. A nation that is careless of the

value of *any* asset it possesses, however small it may appear, will sooner or later discover, to its cost, that *all* its assets have lost their value.

II

In this connection the royal visit to Birmingham in 1874 is peculiarly interesting.

Strange as it may seem now, in those dim and distant days this redoubtable Tory stronghold, this cradle of British Imperialism, was the centre of militant Radicalism in England. Even a Conservative there, it was said, answered to an ordinary Liberal elsewhere. Joseph Chamberlain, the Mayor, was a Radical of the most pronounced type. He had even called himself a Republican, and publicly advocated giving every working man "three acres and a cow."¹ He had immense power over the masses, and he was believed to be sincere. The announcement, therefore, that the Prince and Princess of Wales were to visit Birmingham in state as the guests of the Republican Mayor of the ultra-Radical city gave the whole country a thrill of excitement.

Though great preparations were made to receive them officially, it was expected that they would have a cool reception, particularly as the elections which had taken place the previous week were still "hot in the mouth," as one paper remarked. Nevertheless, neither indifference nor antagonism to royalty prevented people from flocking into Birmingham from all over the

¹ Though Mr. Jesse Collings is reputed to be the author of this famous phrase, Mr. Chamberlain made effective use of it to illustrate his policy.

Black Country to "see the show." It was estimated that the population of the city, then about 360,000, was doubled on the day of the royal visit. The curiosity was as great as it was when Mayor Pétion was presented to Marie Antoinette during the French Revolution.

There was a good deal of cheering as the Prince and Princess drove through the streets to the Town Hall, where they lunched with the Mayor and the Corporation, but certainly nothing like the noise such a crowd could have made had it done its best. A great many hats were never lifted. But if the crowds lacked enthusiasm it was because the vast majority of persons, who had never in their lives seen the Prince and Princess of Wales, were too intent staring with eyes and mouths wide open to think of cheering or waving hats. When the procession repassed later it was cheered to the last Lancer of the escort, "The lovely Princess had won the heart of the Radical city as she bowed right and left with her grave, sweet smile."

As for the "Republican" Mayor, in the speech with which he welcomed the royal pair at the Town Hall, he said: "Here in England the Throne is recognised and respected as the symbol of all constituted and settled government."

Such a statement, coming from such a man, was tantamount to a public recantation of the faith he had previously professed.

"We have heard and chronicled a great many Mayors' speeches," observed the *Times* in reporting it, "but we do not know that we ever heard or chronicled speeches made before royal personages

by Mayors, whether they were Tories, or Whigs, or Liberals, or Radicals, couched in such a tone at once of courteous homage, manly independence, and gentlemanly feeling which were so perfectly becoming and so much the right thing in every way as that of Mr. Chamberlain."

Punch expressed the general opinion in a famous cartoon which depicted him as a lion having his claws trimmed by the Princess of Wales. But though shop-windows all over England abounded in caricatures of him, and the Press sarcastically derided him as a "perfect courtier," Birmingham remained loyal to him.

Perhaps he was never really a Republican, any more than many a present-day politician who labels himself as such is a Socialist, and perceiving, like the equally astute Sir Charles Dilke, that the republican movement of which he had availed himself to enter politics was dead, desired to divest himself publicly of a reputation which now prevented his political advancement. If so, he could not have chosen an occasion better calculated to achieve his purpose.

In any case, from the date of the royal visit "a change came over the spirit of the dream" of Joseph Chamberlain and Birmingham.

III

In former times the quality of mercy was one of the chief attributes of sovereignty. Of all the royal prerogatives, it was one of the most jealously guarded and frequently exercised. It implied, too, the right of appeal to the royal



"A BRUMMAGEM LION."
(From "Punch," November 14, 1874.)

clemency, which was almost the only privilege that the people retained under the old absolute monarchies. The humblest could, and did, petition the king personally, and seldom without success. The result was to render the idea of personal government, depending as it did on the character of the sovereign, appear something concrete and comprehensible. The tyrant, however cruel, was after all human and finite. In this lay the weakness of the old theory of personal rule, and in the end contributed to its overthrow. Ideas, to survive, must be abstract. This explains why the religions of the world invariably endure longer than theories of government.

It is because democracy is an abstract idea that it is so powerful. Its influence is immaterial, theocratic; it suggests something invisible and relentless. Like all ideas from which the personal element is excluded, it is sacrificial. Its complete supremacy would mean, not the subjection, but the extinction of the human will.

Already this tendency can be traced in the manner in which a democratic State exercises the quality of mercy it has usurped from royalty. The mercy of the State is purely mechanical and impersonal. It is no longer a case of some wretched, powerless individual appealing to the clemency of some other all-powerful individual, but to a machine. The mercy of the law in a democratic State is divested entirely of mercy's chief value, of its very essence—human pity. The right of the individual to petition this inhuman abstraction still exists, but the appeal is no longer either personal or human. The

costly and complicated machinery of the law now serves as the intermediary between the petitioner and the petitioned. It would seem as if the State had no need of mercy, and desired to discourage its use.

But if royalty is nowadays denied the right to exercise this prerogative freely as of old, disuse has not yet atrophied its sense of pity. This is still provided with the means of expression by the practice of philanthropy and charity. Some idea of the frequency of the appeals to royal sympathy and their response may be gathered from the following list of engagements of the Prince and Princess of Wales for three months, taken haphazard from an old *Court Journal* :

Opening of Hunstanton Convalescent Home.
Annual Dinner of Cab-drivers' Benevolent Association.

Fancy Bazaar in aid of West End Hospital for Paralytic and Epileptic Children.

Bazaar in aid of Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest, Ventnor.

Visit to Hertford British Hospital.

Laying of Foundation-stone of new Norfolk and Norwich Dispensary.

Visit to Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street.

Opening of new school buildings of Alexandra Orphanage, Hornsey Rise (Their Royal Highnesses will also pass through the grounds of Islington Workhouse).

Annual Dinner of West End Hospital.

Visit to St. Saviour's Church for Deaf and Dumb.

Opening of new wing of French Hospital, Leicester Square; also (same day) *Fête Française* in behalf of French Benevolent Institutions.

Laying of Foundation-stone of new building for Royal Hospital for Incurables.

Visit to Royal Normal College for the Blind, Upper Norwood.

Visit to National Orphan House, Ham Common.

Laying Foundation-stone of additional buildings of Hospital for Consumption, Brompton.

Distribution of Prizes at North London Collegiate School for Girls, etc., etc.

It is no exaggeration to say that, with the exception of her husband, no one person has ever performed so many public acts connected with charity and philanthropy as Alexandra, both as Princess of Wales and Queen.

To compute the money obtained through her influence would be impossible; the value of her example alone is incalculable. On her first public appearance in this capacity, in June 1863, three months after her marriage, when with the Prince she opened the Orphan Asylum at Slough, one man alone contributed £12,000 to its support.

Any scheme for the relief of special distress arising from some great disaster ever found in her an ardent sympathiser. One of the earliest and most notable instances of this kind was caused by the paralysis of the cotton trade in Lancashire during the American Civil War, when more than half a million persons were in a starving

condition. The magnitude of the disaster was so appalling that Parliament was obliged to adopt special measures for its relief. These, however, proved inadequate, and a terrible calamity must have occurred but for the immense fund raised by charity to which the Prince and Princess of Wales were the first and most generous contributors.

Their aid was not limited to the relief of suffering. Its prevention was a subject in which both took a special interest, and many schemes with that object in view originated with them.

The elevation of the nursing profession from the degrading condition in which it existed when Sairey Gamp and Betsy Prigg practised it is a notable instance. It was largely to the interest taken by the Princess of Wales in the reformation begun by Florence Nightingale that nursing has become an honourable and profitable career for women.

As a nurse herself, she yielded the palm to none. "I never knew anyone who could arrange pillows like the Queen," said one who had had the benefit of her ministrations. Her very presence in a sick room had a beneficial effect. She was tireless, and seemed to know the right thing to do in a crisis. Her sister, the Empress Marie, was also invaluable as a nurse. The Emperor Alexander III, who in his later years was a great sufferer and received, it goes without saying, the best attention it was in the power of the medical profession to give, declared that "there were no better nurses in the world than the daughters of the King of Denmark."

They inherited this aptitude from their mother, to whose skill the most experienced physicians were frequently indebted. An instance of this occurred on the birth of the Princess Louise, the future Duchess of Fife. The Princess of Wales was ill at the time with acute rheumatism. This was at first regarded as a painful concomitant of her condition, which, however, instead of improving, as was confidently expected, suddenly became so critical that Sir James Paget took it upon himself to telegraph for her mother without waiting to obtain permission to do so. When it became known how desperately ill she was there was great anxiety throughout the country. For days immense crowds gathered outside Marlborough House to read the bulletins. On one occasion the rumour that she was dying created such consternation among the people at the gates that the Prince of Wales was obliged to send out one of his equerries to reassure them.

In the general anxiety for the mother, her child was almost entirely forgotten. The poorer classes manifested their concern in various ways. On reading a report that she could not sleep, a working man brought a hop-pillow to Marlborough House as a remedy. In one month, it was said, she received more than one thousand prescriptions from humble sympathisers. It was finally necessary to issue an appeal through the Press that no more should be sent, as the Princess was having the very best care.

The popular anxiety, however, was only allayed when her mother returned to Denmark, this being taken as a sign that she was out of danger.

Throughout the illness it was Queen Louise who kept hope alive. From the moment of her arrival till her departure she took upon herself the full responsibility of nursing her daughter. Sir James Paget, the Princess's chief doctor, afterwards stated that it was entirely due to her mother's devoted care that she recovered.

Her first appearance in public after this illness, which lasted six months, was to pay a visit to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Her own suffering had filled her with a profound pity for that of others, especially those who had not the means to obtain the medical advantages of which she had the benefit. It was now that she began to take an active interest in all that was conducive to the prevention and relief of physical pain. The number of "Alexandra" Wings and Wards in hospitals all over the country prove how practical this interest has been.

It was she who personally provided the London Hospital with the means of curing the dread disease of lupus by the Finsen Light treatment. During one of her visits to Denmark, accompanied by her sister, the Empress Marie, she had visited the institution where the young Danish doctor was effecting such remarkable cures by his recently discovered method. "Both sisters," said a lady who went with them, "were simply wild with delight at what they saw." On returning to England the Princess at once declared her intention of introducing the Light cure into the London Hospital, of which she afterwards became the President. Two doctors, a matron, and a nurse, were accordingly sent to Copenhagen to study

the new method, and on their return the Princess provided the hospital with the necessary apparatus.

The Empress Marie even erected a special Finsen Institute in Petrograd. The interest of the sisters in the inventor was equally enthusiastic. It was due to them, as he was the first to acknowledge, that he owed the universal recognition he acquired.

In 1908 the board of governors and staff of the London Hospital erected a bronze statue of Queen Alexandra in the hospital garden in White-chapel as a mark of their appreciation of the work she had done for the institution. This was the first statue ever raised to the Queen in England, though many busts and effigies in her honour, usually to be found adorning some bridge or building, had been set up all over the country in the forty-five years since her marriage.

To say that a king or queen is charitable is a commonplace. Royalty is expected to be charitable, and to trumpet what has come to be taken for granted excites neither surprise nor interest. To-day, when charity has been developed into a highly organised system of relief, it is the organisation that matters. Both giving and receiving are regarded as a sort of formal and necessary convention, and the virtue of compassion is apt to be lost sight of.

Yet this is, or should be, the chief characteristic of all philanthropy. The charity the Queen dispensed was full of compassion. She gave spon-

taneously, gladly, lavishly. Being naturally very generous, between the constant appeals on her purse and her willingness to respond, the treasurer of her household was often hard pressed to keep her supplied with funds without exceeding her revenue. Her private charities—little acts inspired by pity of which the world never knew and which she herself soon forgot—were innumerable. If she felt that anyone with whom she came in contact lacked some necessity, she could not rest till she had relieved the want. She enjoyed the joy of giving too well to *wait* to be solicited. If she knew, as she often did, of cases of extreme poverty she did not stop to inquire into the merits of the case, but gave relief promptly. She had, too, many ways of giving—now by one of her ladies or by an ordinary servant, according to the case ; at other times, if she felt that by her presence she could give aid or comfort, she would go in person.

A tenant on the Sandringham estate has declared that he has “ known her visit a sick labourer at ten o’clock at night, and returning to the Hall, come back again with delicacies at nearly eleven.” When the Prince of Wales was ill with typhoid in 1871, though almost beside herself with anxiety, she never forgot to inquire daily after Blagge, his groom, who was similarly stricken. She gave instructions that his mother should be sent for, and after his death had him buried at her own expense in the little churchyard at Sandringham. The tombstone she erected over his grave bears the following inscription : “ The one is taken, the other left.” In her eyes the grave, in which

all are equal, had effaced the difference between the humble groom and the future King.

It was characteristic of her sense of pity that the humblest appeals met with the readiest response. The following, which by some chance the Press managed to get wind of, is an example of innumerable ones that she was the last to desire to have reported. One day in 1908, in the middle of the London Season, her white motor-car, *en route* for some function or other, was seen to drive up to the door of St. Luke's House, Pembridge Square, Bayswater, a charitable institution for the reception of cases of mortal illness in their latest stages. It seems that, a day or two previous, Martha Massy, one of the patients—a consumptive factory girl—had surreptitiously written a letter to the Queen saying how much she wished to see her before she died.

The letter, which was couched in the simplest phraseology, explained that the writer, though she had often tried, had never been able to see the Queen of whom she had always read in the papers. The Queen was so touched by the evident sincerity of the poor girl that she at once resolved to gratify her wish. The visit was one of absolute surprise. The servant-girl who, on answering the bell, at once recognised the Queen, could scarcely announce her to the matron, while the astonishment of the latter may be imagined when the Queen of England appeared in her little office and explained the object of her visit!

As for Martha Massy, at sight of the Queen standing by her bedside surprise and pleasure

for the moment quite overcame her. But the manner in which her wonderful visitor thanked her for her letter and expressed the pleasure it gave to respond to her request quickly dispelled her nervousness. Though she could find no words to express her heart-felt thanks, the tears in her eyes indicated the fullness of her heart when the Queen handed her a lovely bouquet of orchids, lilies of the valley, and carnations, saying that the flowers had been cut from the Palace gardens specially for her.

Nor were the other patients forgotten. The Queen visited each bed and distributed roses and a kind word to all.

"After leaving the ward," said the matron, "she heard someone coughing and inquired who it was. On being told that it was Martha Massy she ordered some lozenges to be brought from her car, and, retracing her steps once more to the bedside of the girl, placed one of the lozenges in her mouth, and, telling her to take them whenever she had a severe fit of coughing, shook hands with her again."

On another occasion, meeting some poor children by the roadside at Sandringham, she stopped to inquire if their father was a labourer on the estate.

"No, ma'am; he ain't a labourer," put in an urchin proudly, "he's a poacher."

"Does he find much to do?" asked the Queen with a smile.

"Not much; we're half starved at home," was the reply.

"Poor child!" exclaimed the Queen with

ready sympathy. "Tell me where you live, and I will see that you get some food."

As for the father whose vocation the child had unwittingly betrayed, she neither reported nor reproached him, but found him work instead on the estate.

IV

Of cruelty in any form she had a horror. When fishing she used only artificial bait, and tried to persuade others to do the same. On fishing excursions in Denmark her brother-in-law, Alexander III, used to tease her by putting a live worm on his hook, till she refused to go out with him if he persisted. Any act of brutality, if she chanced to witness it, filled her with the deepest indignation.

A story once went the rounds that she had boxed the ears of a boy in Sandringham village whom she saw tormenting a cat.

"It is not true," said Princess Maud, when told of it; "my mother is incapable of such a thing; but," she added, "I am sure she would like to have done it."

One day in Copenhagen, before her marriage, she stopped to remonstrate with a man who was maltreating a dog. At first, not knowing who she was, he resented her interference; but, on being informed, was full of excuses and apologies, whereupon she said scathingly, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself to invent excuses for your cruelty because you have discovered who I am."

Love of animals was one of the distinguishing traits of her character. She brought with her to

England on her marriage two turtle-doves that had been given her when a girl. And she long cherished a beautiful white dove presented to her by the women of Dublin as a mark of affection on her first visit to Ireland. At Sandringham she once made a hobby of collecting birds and animals of all sorts. But the maintenance of her little menagerie was attended with so much inconvenience that the monkeys and bears, tigers and paroquets were finally sent to the Zoo in London and she contented herself with her dogs and horses.

For both she had a special *penchant*. The kennels at Sandringham contained dogs of all descriptions of the purest breed, many of which were presented to her at various times. Each dog had its name, and was known to her personally by it. When walking she was invariably accompanied by a troop of dogs, and could command their obedience by a word. Indeed, the power she possessed over both dogs and horses was extraordinary. Those that enjoyed her special favour repaid her by an equally remarkable fidelity and devotion.

She was particularly fond of borzois, or white Russian wolf-hounds, and out of doors was generally seen attended by one of these stately, decorative creatures. Indoors she gave her preference to fancy Japanese spaniels or Pekinese. The great popularity of these boudoir pets originated in the desire to imitate her.

She was very loyal in her affection for her favourites. The memory of more than one beautiful dog of rare breed is preserved at the kennels by their portraits in oils or by the art of the

taxidermist. In this connection it is worthy of note that, of all the magnificent presents she received on her silver wedding day, none pleased her more than a silver statuette of her favourite horse, Viva, which was given her by her children.

Of all out-door recreations, her favourite was riding. Few women of her day rode better than she. Horsemanship was an art in which she was thoroughly versed. She was equally at home on one side of a horse or the other, and when temporarily lamed by a stiff knee-joint caused by rheumatism, from which she suffered so long after the birth of the Princess Royal, she had her saddles made to enable her to ride on the opposite side. Knowing her horses, she never demanded more of them than she knew they could perform. They never threw her or fell with her, and were always comparatively fresh at the end of a hard day. She herself never appeared fatigued, and, in the hunting season, weather which often damped the ardour of others made no difference to her. Many a time she was the sole lady to turn up at a meet.

Lord Ronald Gower thus describes her hunting at Trentham during a visit she paid there with the Prince in the early years of her marriage :

“ The Princess looked very lovely on her horse, King Arthur, and rode like a bird. Except hurdles, however, which had been put up in the Green Drive, there was little jumping. But the Princess took the hurdles beautifully ; *she has simply no sense of nervousness*. Returning from the hunt after dark, riding through the wood where these hurdles were, she leapt them again,

although both the Prince and Stafford had avoided them.

“The next term at Cambridge, I found my old friend Professor Sidgwick delighted to hear of the Princess being such a plucky horsewoman, saying that her courage and nerve came from the grand old Norse breed.”

A total lack of fear was, indeed, one of the conspicuous features of her character. At the Coronation of Alexander III, when there was every reason to believe that the Nihilists had designed to blow up the entire assembly, one who was present has stated that “the Princess of Wales alone was without a vestige of fear when everybody else was quaking in their boots.”

On the occasion of her second visit to Ireland, which occurred at a time when the country was being terrorised by the Fenians, great anxiety was felt lest she and the Prince should be the victims of some outrage. She insisted, however, on accompanying the Prince and the Viceroy on a tour of some of the most disaffected and dangerous parts of the country. Often their reception was threatening, but the courage of the Princess never deserted her, and steadied the nerves of those around her by its example. When, at one station of the journey, people brought coffins with cross-bones on them and set them down significantly before the royal carriage, the Princess exclaimed, with a smile of pity, “Poor people, I am sorry for them. Perhaps in their place I should do the same!”

What a moment that must have been when, seated by the side of the Prince as their train

was about to leave Brussels for Copenhagen, a youth suddenly sprang upon the step of the carriage and fired two shots point-blank at him, which by a miracle failed to reach their mark! That the Princess should suffer severely from the shock was but natural, but her high spirit enabled her quickly to regain her outward composure. When the excited officials came thronging around her she was perfectly calm and collected.

V

Of all her tastes a love of music was perhaps the chief. Her musical education had been particularly *soignée*. Accustomed as a girl in Copenhagen to hear the first *artistes* of the day she had acquired a thorough understanding and appreciation of technique, and was herself an accomplished pianist.

"Sir Charles Hallé, under whom, after her marriage, she studied for a time," says his son and biographer, "had the greatest regard for her talent, and thought it of a very high order."

Famous musicians, whom it has ever been the custom of royalty to distinguish by special marks of favour, were treated by her with peculiar consideration. It was as if her emotional nature instinctively responded to the magnetic appeal of the royalty, so to speak, inherent in all great singers and performers.

As a tribute from a lover of music to a "Queen of Song," nothing could surpass in its graceful sincerity this "royal command":

"MARLBOROUGH HOUSE,
"10th March, 1888.

"MY DEAR MADAME ALBANI,

"The Queen is going to dine with us on our silver wedding day, and it would be very kind if you would come in the evening at 10 o'clock and sing one little song, as you know what an admirer she is of your lovely voice.

"Yours very sincerely,

"ALEXANDRA."

In innumerable ways she sought to show her appreciation of musical genius. All the greatest musicians of her time, vocal and instrumental, have enjoyed her patronage and received from her princely gifts and other marks of esteem. After her Coronation she appointed Lady Hallé "Violinist to the Queen"—a Court post specially created for her. It would be hard to determine who was the more gratified, the Princess of Wales or Jenny Lind when the great cantatrice received Queen Victoria's command to sing at her wedding. She liked to receive the most famous *artistes* privately and informally. On these occasions, when they would, of course, invariably perform for her benefit, she sat close to the piano so as not to miss a note and listened with rapt attention.

It is principally to her love of opera, which King Edward shared, that the taste for this form of musical entertainment was cultivated and developed in England. Their patronage ensured the success of the Covent Garden Opera, which for half a century was the outstanding feature of the London Season. By making it fashionable

with Society, by which means alone the best *artistes*—always and rightly a very costly luxury—could be procured, not only the public generally, but the musical world especially, were enabled to enjoy what they could not otherwise have experienced in England—certainly to the same extent.

Orchestral music, of which the Queen was particularly fond, benefited greatly by her patronage. By her frequent and informal attendances the Passion music performed in Lent at St. Anne's, Soho, became famous. She was constantly to be seen at concerts of all descriptions; if, as occasionally happened, she arrived late, she waited until the conclusion of the piece being performed before taking her seat. At the concerts at the old St. James's Hall—long since pulled down—many have seen her profile reflected in the glass door which led to the stalls while she stood patiently waiting to enter.

It was, too, largely due to her initiative that the Royal College of Music at Kensington was started, and the Alexandra House, which is a hostel for students connected with the College, is her own idea.

It was no mere courtier flattery which caused the University of Dublin to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Music during her second visit to Ireland in 1885, but a just and well-merited recognition both of her own talent and her encouragement and protection of the musical profession.

CHAPTER IX

A ROYAL HOLIDAY

I. THE CONSTANT MOVEMENT OF ROYAL LIVES—THE TRAVELS OF KINGS—THE ROMANCE WHICH WAS ATTACHED TO THEM IN FORMER TIMES—THE EFFECT ON LITERATURE—THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAVEL IN THE LIFE OF MODERN ROYALTY. II. THE VISIT OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES TO EGYPT IN 1869—ITS PECULIAR INTEREST—ISMAIL PASHA, VICEROY OF EGYPT—HIS EXTRAVAGANCE AND LOVE OF SPLENDOUR—THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS AT CAIRO—THE MAGNIFICENCE WITH WHICH THEY WERE RECEIVED—THE WONDERS OF THE ESBEKIEH PALACE—THE DEPARTURE OF THE HOLY CARPET TO MECCA. III. THE VISIT OF THE PRINCESS TO THE HAREM OF ISMAIL—A SCENE FROM “THE ARABIAN NIGHTS”—THE LADIES OF THE HAREM—THEIR WONDERFUL JEWELS—THE PRINCESS’S DISGUISE. IV. THE ROYAL DAHABEAH—A PARTY OF COOK’S TOURISTS IN PURSUIT—GLIMPSES OF THE PRINCESS ON THE NILE—STROLLING IN THE MOONLIGHT—IN THE DUST-STORM—AT SUNRISE—THE PRINCE AND THE CROCODILE—THE PRINCESS AT LUXOR—IN THE RUINS OF KARNAK—HER INDEFATIGABLE ENERGY—LADY DUFF-GORDON’S IMPRESSION OF THE PRINCESS—THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS START FOR THE SECOND CATARACT—FAILURE OF THE COOK’S TOURISTS TO OVERTAKE THEM. V. THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS AT CONSTANTINOPLE—THEIR RECEPTION BY THE SULTAN ABDUL AZIZ—THE POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE TOUR.

I

MOVEMENT has always been a conspicuous feature of the life of royalty. Save for its *dolce far niente* existence in the Armida-garden of the eighteenth century, which was so roughly interrupted by the French Revolution, it has ever been going and coming. The kings of the Middle Ages were perpetually moving about their dominions, or engaged in wars during which they travelled far and wide. Richard Cœur de Lion was scarcely ever in England. Few sovereigns in the course of their reign have seen more

of their kingdoms than Queen Elizabeth, while Mary Queen of Scots, before her long captivity, had seen as much of hers and far more of the world. There was not a civilised country in Europe that escaped the inquisitive eye of the Emperor Charles V—to cite merely familiar examples. Royalty was never still. Much research would be necessary to find a parallel to George III, Louis XVI, and the majority of European sovereigns of the latter part of the eighteenth century, who seldom, if ever, moved save from one palace to another in its close proximity.

This passion for travel provided royalty with its principal excitement, and created that air of romance which from the earliest times has cast such a glamour over the lives of princes. Their adventures were the theme of the minstrels and the tales of chivalry. Even so late as the age of Louis XIV the novels of Mademoiselle de Scudéry, which had immense popularity, were all about the loves of kings and queens, princes and princesses, who were depicted as experiencing them in the course of journeying about the world.

The great and long vogue such subjects enjoyed was due not only to their romance, but to the curiosity they excited. They described countries that the vast majority of the enthralled readers had no hope of ever seeing. It was the King and his Court that travelled, and had these fascinating adventures; the people stayed at home.

The distaste for travel which royalty manifested in the eighteenth century—just about the time when the *grand tour* became a recognised part of a nobleman's education—was only temporary.

It was due principally to the novel experience of the ease which came of the consciousness of the supremacy of the monarchical system, and which was felt everywhere after the reaction from the Fronde and the Cromwellian regime. In these halcyon days the refined, effortless attractions of brilliant and luxurious Courts offered royalty a much greater possibility of enjoyment than the ruder, more fatiguing pleasures of travel. The eighteenth-century Courts, which were all modelled on Versailles, supplied every want. In France, the centre of these delights, it was with the greatest difficulty that a royal princess could be induced to marry out of the country. Only four did so in the century—two daughters of the Regent d'Orléans, a daughter of Louis XV, and a sister of Louis XVI.

But during and after the stormy Napoleonic period, royalty began once more to move to and fro. With the constantly improving means of communication travel regained its old fascination. To-day no people live in such a state of movement as royal personages. Travel is not only a pleasure with them, but a business. It is one of their most important duties. In their own States it is incumbent on them, in discharging those functions from which some popular benefit may be derived, to visit every part of the country. State visits abroad are always undertaken with a political object, while private foreign visits, whether for pleasure or health, even though devoid of a political purpose, of necessity exercise a political influence. The personality of royalty is one of the subtlest forms of propaganda.

II

Though never out of Europe, or European waters—save on one occasion—few royal personages of her time have travelled more extensively than Queen Alexandra. There is hardly a country house of note or a city of any importance in Great Britain that has not been visited, often several times, by her.

Devoted to yachting, like King Edward, never a year passed till the Great War that she did not cruise in the Mediterranean, the Baltic, or in British waters. Of her innumerable cruises and visits to the Continent, whether official or unofficial, alone or with the King and her children (from whom in their infancy she was seldom separated) one journey is especially memorable—her tour in the East.

The illness from which the Princess had suffered the greater part of 1867 had left her in such indifferant health throughout the whole of the following year that her physicians recommended her to spend the winter of 1868-9 in Egypt, the advantage of whose climate was then beginning to be appreciated. The man-of-war *Ariadne* was accordingly fitted out as a yacht, and the royal party, which consisted of the Prince and Princess of Wales and a small suite, after paying a brief visit to Copenhagen, embarked at Trieste for Alexandria on the 28th of January, 1869. Their plan was to proceed up the Nile as far as the Second Cataract, and afterwards visit Constantinople, the Crimea, and Greece, returning home somewhere about the middle of May.

As a traveller's experience, it deserves to be remembered when many a more imposing royal tour has passed into total oblivion. It is so unique in its way that the *Journal* of the Hon. Mrs. Grey and the graphic reports of Sir William Russell, the *Times* correspondent, which describe it, are worth preserving by the Hakluyt Society or some institution of the kind. Apart from its romantic, it has an historical interest, occurring as it did just as Egypt, while still retaining its Oriental atmosphere, had begun to yield to the vandalising influence of the West.

Ismail, under whom this transformation was taking place, Viceroy and afterwards Khedive of Egypt, was noted for his love of splendour and luxury, the unbridled gratification of which, after making him an exile and the country bankrupt, led to the British occupation. A French education had given his typically Oriental character a European veneer. Conscious that he was the grandson of the famous Mehemet Ali, he was ambitious as well as extravagant, and, in the hope of furthering his political designs, he spared no expense to dazzle his royal guests by the gorgeous display traditional of Eastern hospitality.

It was, however, less by his carefully prepared exhibition of Franco-Oriental splendour than by unrehearsed *Arabian Nights'* effects that this magnificent satrap produced the impression he desired to create.

Egypt in 1869 had not yet become tourist-ridden, though Ismail was doing his best to popularise it. The comparatively few persons who visited it every winter regarded themselves

as travellers rather than tourists. Since the Crusades, the memory of which, along with coats of mail and other souvenirs of the Knights of the Cross, was still preserved in many a pasha's palace and castle, no European princess, certainly none with the immense prestige of the wife of the Heir to the Throne of England, had ever been seen in the land of the Pharaohs. (The visit of the Empress Eugénie did not take place till some months later.) The result was that, what with Ismail's preparations and the unusual character of the event, the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales was most eagerly anticipated.

Though the royal pair travelled as "Lord and Lady Renfrew," Ismail made no attempt to respect their *incognito*.

The news that the *Ariadne* had left Trieste on Wednesday, the 29th of January, at midnight having been telegraphed to Cairo, it was confidently expected that she would arrive at Alexandria on the following Monday, the 3rd of February, at noon. The troops were accordingly warned for duty, the guards were turned out, and officials in Court costume hung about all day long in vain. On Tuesday morning the Viceroy received a telegram announcing that the *Ariadne* was off Alexandria. But early in the afternoon there arrived another message at Cairo to say that it was the *Psyche*, not the *Ariadne*, which had caused the renewed bustle of preparation. Conjecture was now rife, and more absurd than ever. It went so far as to suppose that the Prince and Princess had halted at Corfu to see

the King of Greece, who was supposed to be there *incognito*.

But Wednesday solved all doubts at Cairo. The *Ariadne* was signalled coming into port. Once more the guards were turned out and the palace servants and official *valetaille* warned to be in readiness; while such strangers as took an interest in the proceedings prepared to occupy positions outside the Viceroy's palace.

In the meantime Ismail impatiently awaited his illustrious guests. From time to time brief telegrams were handed to him to note the progress of the royal train. As there was still a considerable interval before it could arrive, he made a final inspection of the dahabeah which had been specially designed for the trip up the Nile, and which was "furnished with a luxury such as even Cleopatra never dreamt of."

Informed that the train was within half an hour of Cairo, the Viceroy hastened back to his palace to put on his uniform and, as the whistle of the engine was heard, reappeared in "a blue frock richly laced with gold, wearing the Order of the Osmanli, and with a curved sword, the hilt of which blazed with diamonds, at his side." At the same time the Egyptian band struck up its weird national hymn, and the troops presented arms as a painted and decorated engine appeared on the rail drawing an American state saloon and the carriages of the royal suite. The train drew up to a nicety, and the Viceroy, stepping on to the platform, stood ready to receive his visitors.

The scene on which the Prince and Princess

gazed on alighting was full of animation and colour.

“The broad sheet of the Nile, crisped by a fresh breeze, which drove a regatta-like fleet of vast-sailed lateen-rigged boats upwards against the current; the opposite shore lined with palm-trees, shaking their tufted crests in the wind; the forests of yards and masts lining the course of the stream; and, rising above them again, the tops of the Pyramids of Gizeh; the irregular outlines of the houses over which peered the domes and minarets of many mosques,—formed the background to a brilliant picture, framed in a sky of heavenly blue, of which the foreground was composed of the colonnades of the barracks crowded by soldiery, the strict line of troops under arms, and officials in uniform.”

Having greeted the Prince and Princess, the Viceroy offered his arm to the latter, and, escorting her to “a handsome carriage drawn by a pair of fine English greys, ridden by English postilions in faultless tops and leathers and jackets, drove off with his guests to the palace prepared for their reception, followed by their suite. While in the streets camels and asses, and people munching sugar-cane, were jostled aside a moment by the cavalcade to fall into their places again after it had passed.”

If the Prince and Princess were not lodged well it was no fault of Ismail. For weeks past the newly built Esbekieh Palace, which the extravagant Viceroy intended as a present for one of his family, had been a scene of incessant and costly labour.

The apartments of the Prince and Princess were a mass of enormous chandeliers, gigantic mirrors, and the richest French furniture. The one in which they slept was immense, and "more like a state drawing-room at Windsor than a bedroom." Silver and gold were beaten and spread out all over the furniture and walls. The bedsteads—great four-posters, which had cost Ismail £3,000 each—were, posts and all, of solid silver.

All the apartments at the Esbekieh were as vast as they were gorgeous.

"My room was so large," says Mrs. Grey, "that, even when the candles were lit, there might be somebody sitting at the other end of it without your knowing it. You could not even hear people speaking from one end to the other!"

In the evening Ismail took his guests to the theatre, where a French company played a Palais Royal farce. "It was strange to see the fez-capped and turbaned people in the pit," observed the *Times* correspondent significantly, "laughing at the jokes which have had their day in the *coulisses* far away. Great is the power of civilisation. Some day these benighted Egyptians may be so much improved as to stand a transformation scene in an English pantomime."

But even here through the cracks, so to speak, in the new French veneer one could faintly discern the old East beneath. Three boxes fenced by gilt lattice-work from top to bottom, "behind which a certain movement was visible," indi-

cated that all trace of the time of Haroun al Raschid had not yet been effaced.

The next day was the date of the departure of the annual Pilgrimage of the Holy Carpet to Mecca—the greatest festival of the year.

“The women of Cairo sat chattering with their children in every safe recess of the streets. They gazed out of the latticed windows, through the sluice-like open traps, through the open casements, crowded the flat roofs, swarmed on the mosque tops, and clustered in the door-ways, clad in sweeping robes which, in their combination, form such tempting yet distracting subjects for the artist who loves to paint masses of coloured drapery. The men and boys lined the streets and sat in the bazaar shops—Arabs, Copts, Syrians, Jews, Egyptians, Turks, Franks, Nubians, Albanians, Anatolians, Greeks, Persians, Circassians—dressed each after his kind. And on all this shifting, kaleidoscopic multitude, over which the fine dust rose from the tread of many feet, there came down here and there through the chinks in the lattice-screen, which covers in the streets, rays of sunshine that produced through the hazy medium the most striking and charming effects of light and shade.

“Then through this scene imagine the camels plodding along with ponderous loads of green vetches ; asses hidden under mounds of vegetables and tares for fodder, or laden with important portions of a small family ; horses and ponies with their riders ; mules and dromedaries with their turbaned or veiled burdens ; and then see an advanced guard of native outriders, followed

by a host of running footmen in front of an open carriage with prancing horses driven by an unmistakable British coachman, capitally turned out with a cockade in his hat and tops complete, pressing through the throng with a great accompaniment of strange cries,—and you may fancy the expression of delighted surprise and curiosity that animated a fair, gentle face dear to so many millions in islands far away.”

One would like to know the thought of “the unmistakable British coachman” as he drove through this bit of the “gorgeous East,” and halted in the vast open space in front of the great mosque where on a dais the resplendent Viceroy and his suite awaited his English guests.

On their arrival the East is hidden again under a thick veneer of “troops presenting arms in the European fashion, irregular cavalry tapping their little saucer-like drums, and the bands saluting with the air ‘*As tu vu la casquette.*’ ” O Ismail !

III

The day before her departure up the Nile the Princess, by virtue of her sex, saw what has ever been to Europeans the most alluring side of Mohammedan life, because no “Christian dog” of a man has ever seen it and lived to tell the tale—the harem.

Ismail’s rivalled that of the most splendid Caliphs of Bagdad.

The reception of the Princess as described by Mrs. Grey, her lady-in-waiting, is like a scene in *The Arabian Nights*. On arriving at the Palace of

the Nile, a vast Oriental pile with many courts and fountains, they were conducted through an immense and beautiful garden to the entrance of the harem, where they found awaiting them the Viceroy's mother, La Grande Princesse, his wives, his daughters, and a retinue of slaves. Each wore a dress of a different colour richly embroidered all over with gold, and trousers of some soft white material.

"On their heads were enormous tiaras, very heavy, though splendid with precious stones; one really more beautiful than another. Necklaces, too, with diamonds as big as a shilling piece, and drops of diamonds cut round like crystals, and quite enormous.

"Each had a ring of a single diamond with no setting to be seen at all. That of La Grande Princesse was so large that she could only wear it on the middle finger.

"Each wife wore a belt about three inches wide, all set quite close with very large diamonds, and uncut emeralds and rubies. I never saw anything to equal it; no gold setting to be seen at all—only these beautiful stones. They had also the Viceroy's picture on the left shoulder set in enormous diamonds."

Taking the Princess by the hand, La Grande Princesse led the way, followed by the rest in procession, through rows of slaves, to an immense room. Here they all paused a moment to "eat a cherry on a most beautiful gold tray, with goblets and plates of gold and precious stones." They then proceeded to another room, "in the middle of which was a kind of round silver table,

about one foot high from the floor, with large square cushions placed all round it."

The Princess having taken her place on a cushion beside *La Grande Princesse à la Turque* like the rest, was given a tortoise-shell spoon with a coral-branch handle by a turbaned and trousered female slave dressed in black and yellow satin embroidered in gold. An elaborate repast of many courses was then served, most of which, when the tortoise-shell spoon was not employed, the Princess ate with her fingers in the Oriental fashion, after which she washed her hands in a silver basin and dried them on a napkin fringed with gold.

When the ablutions were over music was heard, and the harem band appeared. It was composed of twenty female slaves "wearing trousers, frock-coats, and gold buttons, etc., quite European." They were followed by a troop of dancing-girls, "some in yellow satin embroidered in silver, and others in black satin embroidered in gold. They all wore bodices of silver gauze with a belt of gold, very loose, and a large clasp or star of diamonds and precious stones hanging down in front.

"While the dancing was going on a slave brought in a tray covered with a black velvet cloth all embroidered with pearls and enormous uncut emeralds, and in the middle one enormous diamond star. The cover being lifted exposed small cups one mass of diamonds. Another slave carried a coffee-pot, hanging by three long silver chains over a sort of lamp, like the censers used in Catholic churches, while still another poured

coffee into the small diamond cups, each cup being handed by a different slave. Then followed a slave with long Turkish pipes set with diamonds, or cigarettes with the most beautiful holders, all one mass of precious stones; the mouthpiece itself being one large ruby or emerald!

"Altogether there are 500 slaves in the Viceroy's harem, and about twenty of them were always standing at a short distance from our cushions wherever we went."

The impression this visit produced on the Princess was so delightful that she expressed the wish to see how she would look in a *yashmak*. The harem ladies, "whom she had charmed," were only too pleased to gratify her, and, having dressed her and Mrs. Grey up in the most approved fashion, were so entranced with the effect that they entreated them to drive home in this manner and "make the Prince of Wales believe that the Princess had been kept in the harem and a slave sent instead."

This the Princess, who thoroughly entered into the spirit of the joke, consented to do, and departed like a veiled lady of the East, to the intense amusement and regret of her hostesses, to whom her visit had been as great an event in their lives as it had been in hers. The Prince, who was dining with the Viceroy, had not yet returned when she reached the Esbekieh Palace, but she and Mrs. Grey had at least "the satisfaction of thoroughly mystifying dear M. Kanné, our invaluable courier," before their disguise was detected.

IV

In the mode of treating an illustrious visitor Ismail Pasha had nothing to learn from the most civilised and polished nation in Europe. All his love of splendour had expressed itself in the arrangements for the excursion of the Prince and Princess up the Nile. If Cleopatra ever journeyed to the Second Cataract she could not have done so more luxuriously.

The number of the vessels provided for the party formed a little fleet. Nothing like the *Alexandra*, as the Viceroy had named the royal dahabeah out of compliment to his lovely guest, had ever been seen on the Nile. The saloon and the cabins, large, and fitted with every requisite, were panelled in mother-of-pearl and upholstered in blue and gold. It was towed by the "Faad Rabinie" (the God-protected), on which the suite were accommodated and where the Prince and Princess took their meals. Behind followed the "kitchen steamer," towing barges containing provisions, luggage, and animals for riding, etc.

Ismail had forgotten nothing. There was even a barge for "a poor unfortunate French washer-woman, and her husband and child," says Mrs. Grey, though why to be commiserated is not apparent. As escort the *Alexandra* had a steamer containing several British and Egyptian officials, to which was added the *Ornament of the Two Seas*, chartered by the Duke of Sutherland, who, with his party, which included Sir William Russell, the *Times* correspondent, had been invited by the Prince to accompany him.

It goes without saying that the *Alexandra* and those on it excited the liveliest curiosity.

"I would be ashamed to say," wrote the *Times* correspondent, "how much more we were interested in watching the progress of the royal yacht, and in observing those on board of her than in scrutinising the sites of the famous places on both sides of the river above Cairo. 'There is the Princess! You can just see her in the saloon on deck!'"

If such were the feelings of those in attendance, what might not be pardoned in some forty enterprising Britons, male and female, under the guidance of Cook, who had started from England in pursuit, and counted upon overtaking the royal party before they reached the First Cataract?

The spectacle of this pursuit actually inspired a leading article in the *Morning Post*.

"What crime can the Prince of Wales have committed," it reflected mockingly, "that he should be subjected to such a Nemesis as this? A cat may look at a king, and Mr. Cook doubtless thinks he and his forty British Toms and Tabbies are quite entitled to gaze on Royalty at the First Cataract. Imagine Thebes, the hundred-gated city, with a tourist at each portal to intercept the royal visitors! Picture the most enterprising of Cook's party perched among the ruins of Luxor and Karnak, armed with the newest binoculars! And last, but not least, conceive the feelings of the occupants of the royal dahabeah on finding themselves convoyed to the Catacombs by a motley flotilla, manned and womaned by a Cook's company!"

The writer, in his indignation, even went so far as to picture "one of the party getting near enough to secure as a memento an empty beer-bottle whose amber contents may have been quaffed by the Princess herself!" O dear Mid-Victorian England! *Hélas! Où sont les neiges d'antan?*

"The tourists are coming!" was a cry that frequently alarmed Sir William Russell on this memorable trip. "A cloud of smoke arises from a steamer astern, but after a time it is made out that she is a local merchant craft bound for one of the sugar factories, and peace of mind is restored."

But though the idea that Mr. Cook and his tourists should venture to join the royal party causes such perturbation in the mind of the *Times* correspondent, there can be no objection to our following it at a respectful distance. Indeed, he has himself invited us to do so, and through his "excellent binoculars" we too, like him, may gaze upon the Princess as she travels up the Nile.

As usual in royal tours, the chief interest of this one lies in little unexpected incidents and experiences of daily occurrence, which, too, describe it more vividly than the more formal and stereotyped official proceedings that characterise such journeys.

The Prince and Princess, as we watch them through Sir William's binoculars, are "by no means content to gaze in dreamy, blissful tranquillity as the panorama of pyramids and ruins, broad belts of sugar-cane and sand wildernesses,

drift past." They constantly stop to land, while Nature vies with Ismail to entertain them fittingly.

Last night the Princess, with some of her party, went ashore "in the most beautiful moonlight for a stroll, and came upon a caravan encamped. To the right there was one of those hills of bright yellow sand which, shone upon by the moon, looked like gold. To the left there were a few palms scattered here and there. The whole scene had the most complete look of the desert, and was very Eastern and interesting."

To-day there was a dust-storm. "The whole country looked as if it had been covered with thick grey gauze so that only the tops of the palm-trees were visible. We could hardly make out the *Alexandra* for the clouds of dust."

Again Nature, spendthrift like the Viceroy, prepares another thrill. "A fog on the Nile! Not yellow, lung-searching, choking, but white and dense—a clear fog, if such a word may be used, like a cloud of milk." When it lifts the Prince "shoots ducks from a small punt with a large gun."

It even rains for their benefit at Benesouef "for the first time in ten years!" No wonder the inhabitants were amazed.

At Girgeh the Princess decides to see the sun rise on the Nile. "Such a sunrise! A cloudless sky, still studded with twinkling stars in the deep blue of a far west, while the east glowed with orange and amber."

This morning, as Sir William Russell turned his glass towards the *Alexandra* as usual, a steamer is discovered approaching in the distance.

"The tourists are coming!" is the universal cry. Every glass is directed to the ship. At last she is perceived to be a steamer from Cairo. The agitated correspondent "at once experiences a feeling of relief. The Princess will not be driven to bay in the desert!"

Instead she spends the morning comfortably with Mrs. Grey sketching on the deck of the mother-of-pearl and blue dahabeah, while "the Prince lies in the hot sand several hours watching for crocodiles, notwithstanding the burning sun!"

He has done this nearly every day in vain. He is most eager to pot a crocodile. "Any crocodiles about here?" Ismail's officials are asked at every stage of the journey. The Governor of Girgeh, if rightly interpreted, declares that "not one has visited the neighbourhood for the last sixty years." But the Prince is not discouraged, and lo, and behold! one at last falls to his gun. Imagine the excitement! Everybody had been so anxious that he should kill one. Mrs. Grey "screams for joy." The Princess is followed by the whole party, and they rush off in small boats to have a look at the beast. When the Prince returns to the dahabeah with the crocodile "all the servants and men on board give him a hearty cheer." It was nine feet long and four feet round the body, and when opened "a quantity of pebbles were found in its stomach—two bottles full!"

At Girgeh, while the Prince is shooting ducks, the Princess has a laughable experience. Going for a row on the river, her boat sticks in the sand

in two feet of water about thirty yards from the shore. Two gentlemen of the party "make a seat of their arms and carry her ashore." The boatmen offer to do the same for Mrs. Grey. They undress—"luckily some undergarments remain"—for the purpose. But nothing will induce her to trust herself to their care, and while she waits alone and nervous in the stranded boat for the gentlemen to deposit the Princess and return for her, "a young midshipman, Prince Louis of Battenberg," who was of the party, mounts on the back of one of the natives and is carried ashore. As soon as the boat is refloated, to the horror of Mrs. Grey and the intense amusement of the Princess, they all return to it in the same fashion.

To-night, at Girgeh, the Princess adds to her menagerie, which already consists of "a white parrot, two flamingoes, a snapping turtle, a monkey, and two goats." The new addition is a huge long-legged black sheep with an enormous pendulous tail, which on the morrow was to be converted into mutton. "Almost as if aware of its fate, the creature, which had been introduced to the notice of the Princess by one of the party, appealed to her sympathy so strongly that its life is to be spared, and it is to be sent home to England."

At Sioot, when mounting her horse for a ride, the Princess sustained what the doctor called "a luxation of the thumb." The pain was so great as to make tears come to her eyes; "but she never complained."

At Keneh she makes her first acquaintance with a ruined temple—"1,800 years only, quite a

modern affair." Still the *Times* correspondent thought "it was the prettiest picture imaginable to see her wandering about among the ruins, and watch her tracing out the features, with the aid of a cane, of stony Cleopatra on the wall. What a contrast between our fair mistress and the Serpent of Old Nile!" God preserve her from the tourists!

But tourists, though the chief danger to guard her from, is not the only one. What nuisance is this in antiquarian form, lurking in the ruins for his prey? "De most lubly dings in Egypt. Cleopadre's neglace! *Je vous prie, altesse*, I find her myself!"

Not to speak of little difficulties between two of the steamers, when the cackle of poultry and gobbling of turkeys in the provision boat is quite overpowered by altercations between the French and Egyptian servants. "A case of champagne opened without permission and three bottles missing. Christian dog thief, Mussulman only drink water! Then blows and a sound of wailing."

"Lord and Lady Renfrew" might almost imagine themselves out of the throne-light, but for officialdom's constant reminders that they are really Prince and Princess of Wales.

But even at Luxor, where a grand reception awaits them—gorgeously attired Pashas, Consular Agents in full uniform and decorations, flags flying everywhere, and the banks of the Nile crowded with the principal people of the place—it is possible to be unconventional. Why shouldn't everybody, including all the servants

and crew of the entire flotilla, have a picnic in the ruins of Karnak ?

Accordingly, at midday they start in the full blaze of the Egyptian sun—"the Princess on a milk-white ass, caparisoned in red velvet and gold, the Prince on another of darker hue, attended by some two hundred people all in full cry and as merry as the morn; all the suite; Egyptian *valetaille*; French cooks; *Ariadne* sailors careering gloriously on donkies; Peter Robinson, the Prince's Highland piper, in his kilt ingeniously adapted to the latitude in which he is travelling"; and, one hopes, the "unfortunate washerwoman."

We behold the "gay noisy crowd cantering in a long stream over the irrigated lands or sandy desert strips, now spreading out like a fan of many colours, again condensed in an undulating cord-like strand over the plains in clouds of dust, all bright with fantastic dresses, turbaned and loose-robed."

Inside the ruins the thermometer stands at 104°, but a shady place is found for lunch beneath a vast colonnade and a portico. The *Times* correspondent thought it excellent, and the Prince actually invited "a Russian officer and his wife who chanced to be there to join." Can it be possible that the same honour would have been extended to Mr. Cook and his tourists had they been there too ?

At night Luxor is *en fête*. Blue lights are burnt, and rockets fly blazing into the serene, star-studded sky. The Princess watches the scene from the deck of the dahabeah, while the native boats float past to the music of wild choruses.

Her health is now completely restored ; the long months of suffering are forgotten, her spirits are indomitable ; no amount of exertion seems to tire her. She rides about in the blazing sun, explores mummy caves, investigates catacombs ; “dives deep down in the earth among broken slabs and rough stones, followed by swarms of Arab children crying, ‘Baksheesh ! Baksheesh !’ And, the more they cry, the more the Princess gives. It is no use warning her ; she is always only too happy to distribute *baksheesh*.”

She is ready, too, for any adventure. At Philæ, owing to some mishap to her milk-white ass she mounts a wretched donkey without a saddle, “laughing at her novel situation.” She seems, indeed, quite to enjoy it. Has she not been taught to ride bare-back at Bernstorff ? The enraptured correspondent, trudging along ankle-deep in the hot sand, finds it hard to keep up with her. Will she never tire, then ? Not she. She is off again after dinner to see the Temple of Karnak by moonlight.

Suddenly as she approaches, it is lit up by hundreds of lights. Sir William thinks the splendour of this illumination the “crowning glory” of the Nile excursion. Mrs. Grey, too, is entranced. It “reminds her of the Thousand and One Nights.”

The Princess expresses her pleasure, but she is accustomed to pyrotechnic displays. When the moon is at last permitted to assert its supremacy, she has a carpet spread in one of the vast ruined halls and sits there for nearly an hour, “riding away at last on her white donkey full canter amid a crowd of syces with lanterns.”

Assouan is memorable for many things not in the guide-books or included in royal tours. Memories of Assouan, to more than one, will be mournful. It is here that Lady Duff-Gordon, once so brilliant and beautiful in the cultured world of Europe, is dying of consumption. To pass without seeing her is out of the question. She died not long afterwards, and in one of her last letters wrote :

“The Prince was most pleasant and kind, and the Princess too. She is the most perfectly simple-mannered girl I ever saw. She does not even try to be civil, like other great people, but asks blunt questions, and looks at one so heartily with her clear, honest eyes, that she must win all hearts. They were more considerate than any people I have ever seen.”

At Assouan, too, a little tragedy occurs. A young Hungarian noble is lying dead in the cabin of his dahabeah shot through the breast. There are rumours of “a broken heart and an actress of Vienna or Pesth” ; at any rate the dragoman and crew are on the way to Cairo in irons. “Poor lad!” sighs the Princess. “It is sad to die so far from home.”

No, we do not like Assouan, with its *memento mori* incidents. Fate is for the first time unkind to us at Assouan. Here, where the Roman Emperor exiled Juvenal, as our guide-book reminds us, it is a case of *Ave atque vale!* To accompany the Prince and Princess farther is impossible for most of the party. The Nile is too low for the steamers. Even the *Alexandra* has to be abandoned for a smaller dahabeah, in

order to enable the journey to the Second Cataract to be completed.

“At first the Princess will not hear of any obstacle, and announces, ‘It is decided that you are all to come with us.’” But it is not to be. Instead there is a farewell banquet on the Duke of Sutherland’s *Ornament of the Two Seas*. His “Spanish cook, fondly believing that he possesses a bit of ribbon that has been worn by the Princess,” is inspired to produce a masterpiece of confectionery in burnt almonds surmounted by a flag inscribed with “Ich Dien.” Healths are drunk with great enthusiasm, upstanding, and farewells are exchanged. “We were all very sorry to part company,” according to a certain little diary, which the *Times* correspondent is privileged to see. It expresses what all feel.

And now behold, as we regretfully watch the Prince and Princess disappear in the shallow water, where it is impossible to follow them, the Cook’s tourists actually arrive at last!

“Their steamers are just below us in the stream! The tourists are all over the place! Some are bathing off the banks; others, with eccentric head-dresses, are toiling through the deep sand! They are just beaten by a head in the race! Another day, and the Prince and Princess would have been at their mercy!”

It is whispered that various causes of delay occurred down the river—that coal was short; that supplies failed at certain points; that the steamers ran aground very often. At all events, they are just too late, and are obliged to “return disconsolate.”

Some weeks later the Prince and Princess, after continuing up the Nile some distance, returned to Cairo, "where the duties of the great world, with all its fuss and bustle, must again begin." Mrs. Grey felt it "more strongly for the Princess, who had enjoyed it all immensely," than for herself. Everybody regrets that the charming, ideal life is so nearly at an end. One of the Egyptian officials says, "with tears in his eyes, that he wishes he had never been born." Mrs. Grey is "quite low" herself, and "looks sorrowfully at Alexandria as long as she can make anything out."

Even the *Ariadne* seemed to join in the general regret, for, as if desirous of remaining for ever, she collided with two vessels, and "the Princess's quarters were smashed to pieces; but she never evinced any alarm, and was quite cool."

V

It had been arranged that the Prince and Princess should visit Constantinople, the Crimea, and Greece before returning to England; but, interesting though the remainder of the tour was, it had none of the simple, natural incidents that gave the holiday on the Nile its charm.

As in Egypt, so in Turkey. It was barely a century since Constantinople was as unknown and inaccessible as Bokhara is to-day. But the times were long past since the cry, "The Seraskier is before Vienna!" made Europe tremble, and the customs were changing too. Like his Egyptian Viceroy, the Commander of the Faithful had been

to London and Paris, and acquired ideas and tastes similar to those of his magnificent vassal. The harem of Abdul Aziz was furnished *à la Pompadour*, and, though it was filled with odalisques, he had but *one* wife, a Sultana dressed by Worth.

He received his guests with a strange mixture of Eastern pomp and Western etiquette. All that could ravish the senses was placed with Oriental hospitality at their command. A palace as gorgeous as Aladdin's was prepared for them. They had but to clap their hands, and slaves appeared with trays of gold and silver, glittering with gems, and laden with luscious fruit and dainty sweetmeats. Whatever the Capital of the Ottomans could show or yield was at their service.

But all these magnificent attentions sink into nothing compared with the compliments offered by the Sultan himself. In honour of his royal visitors the Padishaw, disregarding the tradition of Islam, of which he was the head, gave a dinner at which not only European ladies, but the highest Turkish officials, were *seated* in his presence. "The Princess sat on his right, looking very lovely in blue satin and diamonds, and afterwards, with the other ladies, joined the Sultana in the Imperial harem." The following night the Sultan went to a ball at the British Embassy. It was the first time in history that such things had ever occurred at a Mohammedan Court!

The English Press, which observed a singular reticence in regard to this tour, broke through its reserve to comment on so remarkable an event in Turkish history.

"What will come of it all?" they asked.

Only “some hope for the soulless and unrecognised Fatimas of the East,” as one paper thought, “after the Sultan has dined face to face with the foremost of England’s wives, on whom the gaudily robed and thin-veiled damsels of Stamboul had flocked to gaze?”

Only wealth, with folded or outspread wings, for the Christian dogs of financiers, contractors, and speculators, who had already begun to batten on the country?

Only deposition and death by a silken harem-cord for sacrilegious and too-extravagant Abdul Aziz?

Only bankruptcy and exile for Ismail, in spite of his two millions a year, and the English instead of the French treading the old *sic-transit-gloria-mundi* path that so many a temporary conqueror has trod before in the eternal land of the Pharaohs?

Or the reawakening of all the East, of which in this very year, 1869, there are already signs at the other extremity of Asia?

“What will come of it all?” was the question the Foreign Offices of the Great Powers were all equally and anxiously asking, as they watched the progress of the Prince and Princess of Wales during this six months’ tour.

Could it be for mere idle amusement that, dropping their *incognito*, which Ismail had refused to recognise, they went to Constantinople, the Crimea, and Greece before returning to England?

In 1869 the European situation was critical. The Eastern Question was in one of its most agitated phases. Turkey and Greece were on the point of war. In Athens King George was

“threatening to pack his trunks.” And France was quarrelling with Prussia over a railway in Luxembourg. In Paris journals of all shades were united on the question. “French troops,” said one, “know the road to Berlin. Waterloo is still ringing in our ears like a funeral knell, and the hour of revenge is anxiously expected by all French patriots.”

The reticence of the English Press was ominous. It evidently considered the tour so important that it refrained as much as possible from calling attention to it. The sole reference to the departure or return of the Prince and Princess of Wales was a bald announcement in the *Court Circular*.

CHAPTER X

QUEEN CONSORT AND QUEEN-MOTHER

I. DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA—THE EFFECT ON THE NATION—ITS SIGNIFICANCE—THE SYMPATHY OF THE WORLD—THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUEEN—THE VICTORIAN AGE—ITS INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER. II. THE GROWTH OF THE MONARCHICAL SPIRIT IN ENGLAND—THE GREAT PERSONAL INFLUENCE OF THE QUEEN—KINGSHIP—WHY IT RETAINS ITS IMPORTANCE—THE CORONATION OF AN ENGLISH KING—WHAT IT MEANS—THE CORONATION OF EDWARD VII—ENTHUSIASM OF THE NATION—THE SPLENDOR OF THE PREPARATIONS—WORLD-WIDE INTEREST IN THE EVENT—ITS DRAMATIC POSTPONEMENT—THE NATION'S DISMAY—GOD SAVE THE KING!—THE IMPRESSION OF A FRENCHMAN—UNIVERSAL SYMPATHY FOR THE QUEEN—AMERICAN TRIBUTES. III. RECOVERY OF THE KING—THE "SECOND" CORONATION—ITS SOLEMNITY—THE CORONATION OF THE QUEEN—THE IMPRESSION IT CREATED—SPLENDOR OF THE EDWARDIAN REGIME—ITS EFFECT ON THE PEOPLE—PRESTIGE OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA—STRIKING TRIBUTE PAID HER BY THE BOERS—THE QUEEN'S FASCINATION—THE EULOGY OF A RADICAL JOURNALIST—PIERRE LOTI'S IMPRESSION OF QUEEN ALEXANDRA. IV. THE SERIOUS SIDE OF PAGEANTRY—EDWARD THE PEACEMAKER—MODERN ROYALTY'S NEED OF PEACE—BELLICOSE DEMOCRACY—PERSONALITY OF KING EDWARD—PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S APPRECIATION—DEATH OF THE KING—HIS LYING-IN-STATE AND FUNERAL—SORROW OF THE PEOPLE—QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S TOUCHING MESSAGE TO THE NATION—IMPRESSION IT PRODUCED. V. SADNESS OF THE QUEEN—"HVIDORE"—THE CALL OF THE PAST—QUEEN-MOTHER AND PEOPLE—THE NATION'S TRIBUTE OF AFFECTION—ALEXANDRA DAY—THE HOMAGE OF A SOCIALIST—REFLECTION ON THE QUEEN'S SIGNIFICANCE.

I

ON the 19th of January, 1901, it was officially announced that Queen Victoria was indisposed. The public were not told that she had been ailing for some time past, and that now the end had come. For reasons of State this was withheld, as such news invariably is, as long as possible.

But England was under no delusion. People at once guessed that the Queen was dying. She was eighty-four. Yet it seemed incredible. Few,

even among the oldest, could remember a time when she had not been Queen. She had reigned so long that she had become, as it were, a habit of mind, a daily custom of the nation.

The next bulletin was awaited with acute suspense. When it appeared, though the worst was still carefully concealed, it was easy to read the truth between the lines. Death was now a grim certainty. Its shadow hung like a pall over the nation. It seemed as if the hush of an invisible presence was over the land. It oppressed the heart with a vague alarm, and subdued even the roar of the traffic in the streets.

On the 22nd of January, when the great bell of St. Paul's tolled the death of the Queen, the solemnity of the occasion was awe-inspiring. The thought that she was dead created a sense of strangeness and loss, of an unfamiliar future and chill change.

Her name, bound up as it was with all that was familiar and thrilling in the lives of the people of "this small, sea-beaten, immortal land," had come to symbolise England in the minds of all and all that England meant to them. Power and increase and happiness, peace and prosperity beyond parallel had been the immeasurable blessings of the nation under her fortunate sceptre from the beginning to the end. Motley's magnificent eulogy of William the Silent might, with a slight modification, be applied to her: "While she lived she was the guiding star of a great Empire, and when she died the little children wept in the streets."

And now she is dead! "The supreme woman

of the world, the best of the highest, the greatest of the good, has gone." And the wonderful reign is closed, the unparalleled cycle is ended !

Behind the sorrow there was a half-superstitious feeling that the nation had reached its zenith, and must now begin to decline. It was as if, with the venerable and venerated Queen, the golden link of the race had snapped. This "appalling truth" found expression in many a pulpit and in many a newspaper.

"We were finding ourselves somewhat less secure of our position than we could desire, somewhat less abreast of the problems of the age than we ought to be, considering the initial advantage secured. Success must now be striven hard for ; and, just when the impetus has spent itself, do we find a corresponding determination and energy to made good this deficiency ? There's the rub."

The very fact of such a question implied a doubt. To all thoughtful people the nation stood at the parting of the ways of Empire.

The same sense of something finished, something vanished, of uncertainty and insecurity, was felt by mankind in general. As one paper expressed it, "a sob of sorrow was heard round the world." For the moment international rivalries and controversies ceased. Hostile newspapers in lands over which England held no sway hastened to testify their sympathy. It was as if the whole world was conscious that its most illustrious tenant was taking her departure, and, instead of speeding, would fain stay the parting guest.

From its kith and kin on the other side of the Atlantic, England had a degree of love and sympathy "the greatest that was ever given by the United States in such a cause to any other land." As soon as it was known that the Queen was ill the American Senate voted that it should officially ask for news of her condition. The day of the funeral, when in London "' the meteor flag of England' was draped in mourning, and the sadly martial strains of the 'Dead March' wailed in the people's ears," was observed in the United States as a day of "incomparable bereavement."

The American Press rivalled, and in cases excelled, the English in expressions of grief and regret. "We feel our share in this tragedy," wrote the American correspondent of the *Times*, "greater than that of all others, than the English themselves. These are not my words. I but echo those I hear on all hands, those which are spoken or printed from the Atlantic to the Pacific."

The French Press declared that "the death of this noble woman is the most important event of our age; the fall of Bismarck was merely a trivial incident in comparison with it."

Even in Ireland the universal concern occasioned by the death of Queen Victoria was regarded as "the most remarkable demonstration of the brotherhood of men evidenced in the nineteenth century, with which Her Majesty's life was practically conterminous."

This was because the Queen had been, as was

very pertinently observed, the "Ruler of the Nineteenth Century."

If her reign in its unparalleled expansion of the British race revealed, as was said, "the divine persistence, the splendid continuity of the kith and kin of England," it also coincided very accurately with a sort of second Renaissance, an intellectual movement throughout the world which had accomplished in a brief span more than had been done in preceding centuries. For the Victorian Age was something more than the national glory of England. Since the Reformation there had been no such awakening of the mind, no such remarkable stride in the path of progress. It was an era that need not fear comparison with the Golden Age of Athens under Pericles, or the Golden Age of Rome under Augustus. In art, in letters, in music, in science, in industry, in commerce, and above all in the moral and material advancement of the masses, the Victorian Age was not a national but an international epoch in the history of civilisation. It had seen its "glories star by star expire." The giant breed had passed. And now, with the ruler of the nation whose prestige had dominated it, the wonderful age itself had closed. Well might Civilisation, "stumbling o'er recollections," shed a universal tear, and at the grave of Victoria lament, like Byron over Rome, its "trebly hundred triumphs."

But the world ever moves onward. America, as if conscious of her youth, struck the first note of encouragement and hope. Her message was to the effect that, though the Victorian Age was

ended, "far on in summers that we shall not see" something of the Victorian Queenship will victoriously abide as a still vital force wherever the British flag is raised and, indeed, wherever the English tongue is heard.

Consoled by this cheering thought, England turned back from the grave of the Queen to greet her successor. After the first shock of her death had passed it was easy to be hopeful and full of cheer. With a sense of relief people realised that the death of the Queen had really altered nothing. The new regime was merely the old one regilded and refurbished.

As the *Irish Times*, in summing up the situation, prophetically observed: "The full effect of Her Majesty's death will probably not be realised for some years."

II

One of the most remarkable things about the Victorian era was the growth of the monarchical spirit. This was noticeable even in countries where the form of Government was republican. In France the failure of royalty to maintain itself was due not so much to any deep-rooted antipathy as to the inability of royalty to adapt itself to democracy. Even there, as long as royalty showed a disposition to assimilate the new ideas, the Throne was preserved. In all countries where this disposition manifested itself *loyally*, democracy actually strengthened the Throne. For the idea of democracy is by no means incompatible with the idea of royalty. England is an eloquent example of the proof of the com-

patibility of the two ideas—providing always the one is loyal to the other. Loyalty begets loyalty.

In England, thanks to the wisdom of Queen Victoria, with the restriction of the royal prerogatives the personal influence of the monarch had proportionally increased. On the death of the Queen the parliamentary correspondent of the *Scotsman*, commenting on this somewhat remarkable fact, wrote to his paper: "To say that the Queen desired a certain thing was to put its fulfilment beyond question. The moment the personality of the Queen entered into the talk of the lobby and her influence was declared, there was acquiescence in it, a belief in it which was reverential."

It is customary to attribute this revival of the monarchical spirit in England solely to the character and conduct of Victoria as Queen and woman. But this is only partially true. In her effort to secure the succession, which was the main purpose and achievement of her life, she was met more than half-way by the people themselves. For it cannot be too strongly emphasised that democracy, like royalty, is adaptable, and responds perhaps even more readily to the influences to which it is exposed.

No discordant note was struck on King Edward's accession. Never was a King more sincerely welcomed. When Parliament was summoned to take the customary oath of allegiance, the members flocked from all over the country to take it with alacrity. Among the first was Joseph Chamberlain—far enough behind him now lay Republicanism and "three acres and a cow."

If the throne to which Edward VII succeeded was "broad-based upon the people's will"—a fact upon which the whole British Empire congratulated itself—it was due to an intense and natural desire that the sudden break in the continuity of the national traditions and life should be mended as soon as possible.

The kingship was the symbol of this continuity as well as of the unity it implies—a fact of supreme importance in these modern days. The kingship is the oldest institution in the land. It dates from the nation's commencement. It was in existence before the earliest records; even the Church comes later. And from the beginning it has been the point of union; first of the Saxons among themselves, then of them and the Danes, and later of both with their Norman conquerors. In the fusion of conflicting interests, with which the struggles of contending factions always ended in the Middle Ages, the kingship was the pivot of reconciliation. It was the point of union of England and Scotland. Even in the Cromwellian period it was the central institution, as to the interpretation of which Cavaliers and Roundheads had such very decided and opposite views. To-day the kingship personifies the unity of the British Empire. It is the chief link between the past, the present, and the future.

This idea was at the bottom of the eagerness with which the people of all classes and conditions anticipated the Coronation. In whatever way one may regard the pageantry of royal ceremonies, there will always be something in the crowning of a king to strike the imagination. Of all ancient

forms that, for the sake of tradition, continue to be preserved it is the only one which, in spite of the changes of time, has lost neither its meaning nor importance.

In this respect the Coronation of an English king is especially interesting and instructive. With the single exception of the election and coronation of the Pope, it is the most antique ceremony existing in the modern world. For one thousand years the English kings have been crowned in the same spot and in the same manner. This alone is sufficient to create a sense of stability, of security.

But a Coronation is no mere date in the life of a nation. Beneath the surface of its pomp and pageantry, which delight and dazzle the senses, lies a world of meaning, so strange, so solemn that even the dullest and the most frivolous are dimly conscious of it. It is in reality "the ratification of a covenant between a free people accustomed for long centuries to be governed according to statutes in Parliament agreed upon, and their hereditary King, strengthened by a common supplication of both to Heaven that he may be endowed with all kingly virtues in the exercise of his duties." Thus, a Coronation comes very close indeed to the primitive conception of royalty.

The rites attached to this ceremony had once a very definite and vital meaning. The covenant between the Saxon barbarians and their king was ratified by raising him aloft on their shields, with much shouting and rejoicing. The Church added its mysticism and Feudalism its symbolism to

the ceremony. The Church in the Middle Ages regarded a Coronation as a mystical union—like that of the marriage of Venice to the Adriatic. When Queen Elizabeth was urged by the Commons to marry she based her refusal on the ground that “England was her husband, espoused to her by this pledge” (the Coronation ring). In the same sense the feudal symbols of homage, though less mystical, were equally significant. They emphasised the duties of the king under the covenant. He was “crowned to serve.”

Stripped of these rites of which the significance is now outworn, or discoverable only by antiquarians or ecclesiastics, the ceremony still remains what it has ever been—a solemn covenant between the King and the people.

The mass of the people naturally did not stop to make these subtle reflections. But the Press, to which they carelessly relegate the trouble of thinking for them, did, and gave utterance to them in many a leading article.

To the great mass of the people the Coronation of Edward VII and his Consort was merely another Jubilee. The novelty of the event—there had not been a Coronation for sixty-four years; the immense popularity of the King and Queen; the recent happy conclusion of the unpopular Boer War; and the patriotic emotions inspired by the splendour of the preparations,—all contributed to make it a great national festival. For months beforehand there was a carnival spirit in the air. As the great day approached expectancy became electric. London, where it reached its highest pitch, was thronged with

visitors from every part of the Empire and the world—the pick of Europe and America, the elect of the Dominions, Rajahs and Maharajahs in gorgeous apparel from India, Kings from Africa, and Princes from the Farthest East. Above the roar of the traffic was heard the sound of hammers and saws. The streets blazed with fresh colour at every turn, as radiantly in Whitechapel as in Pall Mall. The weather was perfect. The decorated thoroughfares were given over to gaiety and holiday-making. On the pavements tall troopers from the Colonies and magnificent Lancers from Bengal towered above the crowds. In the roadways coster-carts were jammed in beside royal carriages. Such was the spectacle London presented on the 24th of June, 1902—the eve, to all appearances, of what was to be the greatest pageant in English history.

And then suddenly, at the very height of the day, at noon, a shadow fell athwart the Empire, “Illness of the King! Coronation Postponed!” The cry echoed and re-echoed throughout London. A sickening fear seized the heart. What did it mean, this Belshazzar-portent, this strange writing on the wall? Explain it, ye wise men! Was it, as one would-be Daniel interpreted it, “a stern warning sent to the British Empire, at the height of its pride and power, to remind it of the brevity and mortality of greatness”?

The hammering and sawing ceased. The traffic melted away in the decorated streets. As if by instinct crowds collected at Buckingham Palace, the Mansion House, the Houses of Parliament, and waited patiently, silently, anxiously, hour

after hour for the bulletins. For days the nation was sick with suspense. Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, in breaking the news to the House of Lords, had said that the operation which the King had undergone was "of singular severity." The Lord Mayor of London spoke not only for the City but for England and the Empire when he described the King as "a person whom we love, whose family we revere, and whose dynasty lives in our affections and hearts." God save the King! was the thought uppermost in the minds of all.

The announcement that "it was the King's earnest wish that the celebrations should be held as arranged" for the benefit of those who would otherwise suffer financial loss by their postponement, increased the sense of personal affliction.

"But how can the people rejoice now, no matter how much the King desires it?" exclaimed a Methodist minister. "They must feel somewhat like the children of Israel when they sat down by the waters of Babylon and sorrowfully asked their captors, 'How can we sing the songs of Sion in a strange land?'"

The impression this dramatic event made upon a Frenchman, who had come to London with his wife for the Coronation, may perhaps give some faint idea of the general consternation.

"Everywhere along the route"—between Paris and London—he wrote to a friend in France, "there was a widespread gaiety, at the railway stations, in the trains, on the steamboats. We had engaged our rooms at the Carlton Hotel,

The next morning we were greeted by a bright sun which gave promise of a beautiful day, while the brilliant aspect of the city afforded special attractions. Under this impression we leisurely made our preparations for wandering about the animated streets, the hum of which already reached us.

“We went down into the luncheon-room, which was quite full. The scene was a picturesque one. There were eager conversations carried on in nearly all languages; bursts of laughter, a constant coming and going, something cordial and resounding, producing an extreme sense of ease.

“All at once there was an instantaneous and striking silence. We looked around with surprise, and, as the silence continued, we rose from our seats. Everybody was standing motionless, as if petrified. In the middle of the room Mr. Ritz, the chief manager of the hotel, pale and dejected, was speaking in a voice muffled but clearly audible to all. He said, ‘The Coronation will not take place. The King, after consultation with his physicians, is now undergoing an operation, dangerous, perhaps mortal, which has been deemed absolutely and immediately necessary.’

“Everybody was stupefied. Then, after a few moments’ silence, there was a rush to the galleries, the Palm Court, the ground-floor salons, and to the Exchange Company’s Office, where the tapes continued to unroll, and where further information was hoped for.

“At this moment, for there is always a touch of comedy in every drama, an enormous omnibus

piled up with luggage stopped before the chief entrance. It contained a Californian family—father, mother, five boys and girls from sixteen years old downwards, and four servants. They had engaged for a large sum rooms looking out on the line of the procession, and were preparing to go up to them. The children had already taken possession of the ground-floor and were frolicking among the crowd as if the hotel belonged to them. The parents, however, struck by the unusual aspect of things, asked a waiter what had happened. On being told, the wife, who had been travelling almost uninterruptedly for a fortnight, said calmly to her husband, after a moment's surprise :

“ ‘ Mind you, Joby, we shall only have light luggage taken up, and to-morrow, if possible, we will start for home again.’ ”

“ ‘ All right,’ tranquilly replied the husband. ”

“ I have never seen anything sadder than the demeanour of the people around them. At ordinary times this scene would have caused indescribable merriment; but, though everybody perceived how really comical were the arrival, the surprise, and the brief dialogue, there was not the slightest smile on the lips of the spectators. ”

“ The next evening the Carlton was to have given a grand dinner, followed by a brilliant concert. By the King's express desire that ‘ all celebrations should be held as already arranged,’ this entertainment, along with the others, was proceeded with. The hall was most lavishly decorated and every table was occupied, but there was no gaiety, and conversation was almost in

a whisper. The concert was a little shortened, and at one point a lady who sang was asked to give the National Anthem. The entire company rose and joined in it, but in some parts of the hall there were sobs. Whether foreigners or not, the women wept, and nearly all the men had tears coursing down their cheeks. The vocalist, affected by these tears and sobs, went into hysterics. The concert stopped, and the company, dejected and silent, left the hall. Nearly all went to their rooms. The few who remained conversed in low tones on the fatality which had befallen England and her King."

Abroad this sudden and dramatic climax to the parade of Imperial grandeur created a profound impression. On the Continent and in America people eagerly awaited the bulletins from London. In the little Swiss town of Neufchatel a newspaper gratuitously distributed fly-sheets giving the news of the postponement of the Coronation, the operation undergone by the King, and the dismay pervading London.

Sincere sympathy was expressed in quarters where it was least expected. An Anglophobe journal in New York published a glowing tribute to the King. "Whatever the emergency or peril," it wrote, "we know that the King, if he survive, will wisely, firmly, tactfully uphold international justice and peace. His motives are pure, his qualities in that proportion which make for true statesmanship, and his opportunities may

win for him the highest attributes of greatness in the eyes of his own people and mankind."

Nor was "the gentle Queen, who was to have shared in the full triumph of her husband, and who has at once unflinchingly taken up her post of duty in the sick-room," forgotten. The sympathy expressed for her was great and universal.

Telegrams were continually arriving at Buckingham Palace addressed to the Queen, which testified eloquently not only to the way in which the King's danger was regarded, but to the loyalty which her first presence in England was sufficient to excite. The hope was general that "the national feeling towards Her Majesty would be furnished with an opportunity for its expression."

From the United States, though she had never been there, she received many tokens of sympathy which proved in a remarkable way how deeply her personality appealed to Americans. The papers, in pleading for fuller accounts of her health, declared that the sympathy felt for her was as sincere as the admiration and affection she had long inspired. That in her distress she should have found the time to receive the American Ambassador and his wife before their departure from London was "greatly appreciated as denoting her sense of America's profound sympathy."

III

King Edward, favourite of Fortune that he was, made a remarkable recovery. When pronounced out of danger the doctors declared that it would

be some months before he would be well enough to endure the fatigues of the Coronation ceremonies. Nevertheless, so rapid was his recovery that in six weeks he was able to be crowned.

The “second” Coronation, though very impressive, fell somewhat short of what had been originally intended. There were fewer distinguished personages present, and most of the Indian and Colonial contingents had departed for their respective countries. The crowds were less *insouciant*, the gaiety less exuberant. The note now was one of thanksgiving rather than of triumphant national pride. “Lest we forget” was the thought uppermost in the minds of all. As Queen Alexandra remarked to the Archbishop of York, “It was quite different from the *last* time. Then we were thinking too much of the pageant, and not enough about the religious part of the ceremony.”

The present occasion was more of a private national event. The public seemed more conscious of the solemnity of the covenant, of the significance of the mystical union between the King and the people. And this perhaps was the true interpretation of the “portent” of the King’s sudden illness.

As the Queen advanced up the nave of Westminster Abbey, “matchless and superb,” in robes such as no other English queen had ever worn before, a thrill ran through the vast assembly.

“It seemed,” said one, describing the effect she produced, “as though there burst upon the imagination for the first time the full sense of what a Coronation means.”

The brief, brilliant reign that followed was the after-glow, so to speak, of the splendour of Victoria's. There was something about it of the pomp of a gorgeous Venetian sunset. England seemed perpetually *en fête*. There was a continual *va-et-vient* of royalty. Never had there been so many state visits of kings and queens and distinguished personages. Never since the Middle Ages had there been such a time when so much importance was attached to pageantry and ceremonial. Picturesque old forms and elaborate ceremonies long hidden away in the attic of history were resurrected. All the trappings of kingship were reblazoned. Splendour exuded its subtle perfume and gladdened the senses. Its spirit infected all classes. The *joie de vivre* was contagious. It was good to be alive.

Democracy gladly wore the livery of royalty. The drab lives of the poor were continually flecked with colour and tinged with romance. The people participated in the pomp of the Court as they had not done for centuries. For the Sovereign performed his chief duties and took his chief pleasures in public. Sometimes it is a gala night at the opera, when the spectacle of royalty flashing in state through the Rembrandt-lit gloom of the streets is incomparably more artistic and impressive than when beheld in the glare of an electric-lit opera-box in the midst of the dazzle of decorations and diamonds. Sometimes it is a royal progress in broad daylight along streets, flagged and sanded, as far as the eye can see—— Here they come! a sense of elation, the pressure of the crowd a-tiptoe, the breaker-roar of cheers,

hats, and handkerchiefs in the air, a flash of scarlet, a glimpse of the jovial King, the unforgettable smile of the Queen, the clatter and clink of the escort—all in a second—and some instinctive compelling impulse of loyalty and a faint stirring of I know not what inherited, atavistic memories.

In the pageants of the reign the Queen, no less than the King, was ever in the very centre and foreground of the stage. Of the many proofs that could be cited of the great importance with which she was regarded two are particularly significant. The first, as was fitting, was given by the King himself when, within three weeks of his accession, he created Queen Alexandra, by a special statute, a Lady of the Garter. By this distinction, which was unprecedented, King Edward marked at the very outset of his reign his determination to emphasise the dignity of her status and to associate it with his.

The other was the presentation to the Queen on the King's birthday in 1907 of the Cullinan Diamond, which had been recently discovered in South Africa and was the largest in the world. This noble gift had been subscribed and paid for by the Boers at General Botha's instigation. It was offered as "a token of reconciliation," and proved in a singularly graceful way how far-reaching was the spell of the Queen's personality.

The admiration she aroused at her Coronation in 1902 was still as great as at her marriage in 1863. The sentiment she inspired is, perhaps, easier to understand from the fact that, in the interval of thirty-nine years since her arrival in

England as a bride, her beauty had suffered no diminution. Such cases are so rare as to be historical. At seventy Ninon de L'Enclos was still capable of inspiring love. The beauty of the Empress Eugénie was at its meridian when, at forty-five, she fled from the Tuileries. How indulgent Father Time was to Queen Alexandra may be gathered from the following effusion of a young Radical journalist at her Coronation :

"There isn't going to be any gush in this article. Queen Alexandra is a woman, a charming woman and a good woman—just that and nothing more. But what more could she be? I have never spoken to her, but I have often seen her. She casts a spell. Her graceful figure and carriage, her handsome face, and the way she has of smiling with her mouth—those qualities produce this effect upon men, that they actually fall in love with her. Not, of course, to the extent of causing them, with hang-dog air, to wander alone in the moonlight. But, in the fascination of her presence, they really do fall in love with her. It was so when she came to England at eighteen to be married. It is so now when she is fifty-eight. That this is her age would seem to be the incredible fact. Her appearance gives the calendar the lie direct."

Still more remarkable was the effect she produced at sixty-five on Pierre Loti.

"It was during my first and only visit to London at the end of the 'season' in 1909. At a ball at the French Embassy at which I arrived about midnight, I observed, in one of the rooms, a woman standing against the wall from whom

the dancers appeared to keep at a respectful distance as they revolved past her—a slender, youthful woman with a smile on her face. She was dressed entirely in black of some diaphanous material with a sort of pale fire, like the flame of alcohol, round the bottom of the skirt.

“When someone said, ‘It is the Queen,’ deceived by her youthfulness, I should have doubted it. But I had caught a glimpse of her driving the previous day, and I recognised the fine profile. Besides her diamond coronet was a *couronne fermée*, such as only queens have the right to wear.

“Later, when she left the hall, I observed her again. From under her cloak of grey fur peeped the dress of black gauze with its pale flames. Her head was uncovered, save for the scintillating *couronne fermée*. The cruel light fell full upon her. But she still looked young.”

The next day the author of *Pêcheur d'Islande*, *Fantôme d'Orient*, *Madame Chrysanthème*, and many other familiar masterpieces had the honour of being received by Queen Alexandra at Buckingham Palace. She was on the point of leaving London. The Palace was already closed.

“It was high noon. Nothing stirred in the great gravelled courts. The Palace loomed morose and silent, like an empty building. A lacquey, however, appeared as my carriage drew up at some private entrance, and ushered me into a modest parlour. Immediately afterwards a pleasant elderly woman, some lady-in-waiting or other, entered and requested me to follow her, in French *sans accent*. She conducted me through dark, narrow corridors to a little lift with two seats

which she worked herself. It stopped at the first story, and, having passed through more dark corridors, we arrived at a room looking out upon trees.

“ ‘Remain here,’ she said, ‘and I will inform Her Majesty.’

“ With this she vanished, and I saw her no more. Left alone, I granted myself the privilege of glancing round this private apartment in the hope that it would reveal a little of the personality of the Sovereign. It contained no suggestion of splendour or of luxury. It was a modest room with an air of neatness and simplicity, rather severe perhaps, but in perfect taste. It seemed as if it said that she who dwelt in it *submitted* to pomp and pageantry. On the walls, on the furniture, there were quantities of framed photographs, most of them in plain leather frames, but photographs of princesses and empresses autographed with grand names.

“ Suddenly the Queen appeared—the Queen, as astonishingly young by day as by night, and clad so simply that, had it not been for the supreme distinction of her person, nothing would have betrayed her rank. The pause before she spoke seemed to deepen the stillness of the empty Palace. It is very embarrassing to talk for the first time to one of whom you know nothing, above all one enveloped in royal majesty, and who knows much of *you* through books in which you have revealed yourself too plainly. When the Queen spoke of my travels, my books, I experienced something like remorse as I thought of my attacks on England, and I entangled myself in embarrassed excuses.

“ ‘Oh,’ interrupted the Queen, with a trustfulness which touched me more than if she had reproached me, ‘that belongs to the past, I am sure.’

“ ‘Yes, madame,’ I replied, ‘that belongs to the past.’ Then I recalled uneasily a certain article on Rangoon, about to appear, in which I had bitterly criticised the British occupation of Burmah. *Mon dieu!* shall I have time to suppress it, at least to tone it down? Oh, the gentleness, the goodness, the rectitude, apparent from the very first moment in this Queen! . . .

“ After a time which appeared to me very short but which was almost long for an audience, Her Majesty deigned to ask me if I would like to see the Palace. To see it in such company never should I have dared to hope! She rose, and I followed her for a never-to-be-forgotten promenade in the vast deserted pile.

“ From the simple, unpretentious private apartment we passed suddenly into magnificent saloons with gilded ceilings, marble colonnades, and walls covered with priceless masterpieces, without meeting a soul. The Queen, with her exquisite hand, unlocked and opened the heavy gilded doors as we passed through the deserted and silent rooms, in all of which, though about to be abandoned, there were clusters of blue hortensias, pink azaleas, orchids and lilies, arranged as if for a *fête!* ”

Among the various objects the rooms contained, the Queen indicated two full-length portraits of herself and discussed their merits with Pierre Loti. She also pointed out a picture of

Queen Victoria, "a dear little child in a charming early nineteenth-century group," and asked him if he could guess who it was. She stopped, too, "with an expression of wonderful tenderness," to show him the portrait of the son of whom death had robbed her—the young Duke of Clarence.

"By the delicacy and adorable simplicity of her manner my guide almost made me forget that she was not only the *grande dame* she had the air of being, but that she was also Alexandra of Denmark, Queen of England, and Empress of India, who on great occasions entered these rooms in state, glittering with historic diamonds, and took her place on the throne which to-day was covered up like any ordinary chair!

"In this fashion we arrived in a vestibule overlooking a monumental staircase. Her Majesty extended her hand. While I bowed over it she disappeared, and I found myself suddenly quite alone and conscious of an affinity for this Queen so visibly noble and good.

"It was evidently intended that I should descend the stairs. But where was I, in what part of this Palace? Inquiry was impossible. There was not a vestige of life anywhere. After ascending in a little lift, almost clandestinely, I now descended by a grand staircase, not knowing whither I was going. At the bottom there were magnificent rooms, all deserted and still. I passed closed doors not daring to knock, daring still less to open them. After several minutes I met, by chance, a lacquey who conducted me to the entrance where my carriage awaited me.

"If I had seen Buckingham Palace under any

other circumstances, one of a crowd on a state occasion, I should probably retain no lasting impression. But that Queen, those flowers, the solitude, the stillness! I felt as if I had been in an enchanted palace.”¹

IV

The splendour which characterised King Edward's reign was inspired by no mere vulgar desire for display or idle love of amusement. Beneath its outward semblance of pleasure and licence lay a definite and serious purpose, which the King pursued indefatigably. The pageant of his “nine crowded years of kingship” was, so to speak, a masque of duty.

It is not in office hours, during the ordinary routine of the day's work, as every business man knows, that the most important affairs are transacted. The clerks merely ratify then in conventional forms the bargains which have been concluded in the hours and places of recreation when their chiefs meet in friendly intercourse.

It was precisely by adhering to this well-tested precept that King Edward displayed that “business instinct” which enabled him, as the “senior partner in the old-established firm of the British Empire,” as he was once described, to accomplish so much for the nation. The splendour in which he lived was merely the British Empire's business advertisement. Personally he was himself totally devoid of ostentation. There was not

¹ “Une furtive silhouette de Sa Majesté la reine Alexandra,” par Pierre Loti. *Figaro*, Paris, 20 Mai, 1910.

an atom of pose about him. He always used the pageantry of kingship for the service of the State, never for display. During his reign England made more treaties, and more important ones, than in the same space of time in all her previous history. This achievement was entirely due to the personality of the King, which found unrivalled opportunities for expressing itself, not only in the interchange of friendly visits with all the sovereigns of Europe, which gave such lustre to his reign, but also in the pursuit of pleasure or health.

His reign was, so to speak, a sermon without words of which the text was Peace. He advocated it unceasingly at home and abroad alike. Edward the Peacemaker he was termed.

In reality it was not so much his *desire* for peace, but the *skill* with which he advocated it, that thus distinguished him from the other kings of his time. Nothing is more absurd than to imagine, as many frequently do, that kings are naturally warlike, or at least indifferent to war. Such an opinion is absurd, not because its falsity is based on prejudice, but on superficiality and ignorance. As a matter of fact, since the French Revolution royalty has been an essentially pacific institution. War, even if successful, is a direct menace to its existence. A fatal war means extinction. There have been no truer, more selfish lovers of peace than the kings of modern times. Those who have loved it most have had the most reason to fear the effects of war. Those who might, with a semblance of truth, be termed indifferent to war have been only seemingly so. "L'empire, c'est la paix,"

was no mere political catch-word of Napoleon III intended to deceive the world, but the expression of a natural conviction that the security of the throne to which he aspired depended on peace. No king, nowadays, dreams of going to war who has not the nation behind him. It is democracy, not royalty, which is bellicose in modern times. The wars of the nineteenth century and after have been wars of peoples—even when not popular—and the people fight with a ferocity, with an implacable hatred such as the pre-Revolutionary kings, who *did* unleash the dogs of war when it pleased them, were quite incapable of.

But to denounce democracy for this Genghis-like spirit is not altogether fair. *Autres temps, autres mœurs*. The spirit of chivalry breathed its last at Fontenoy. It is only its ghost which has been seen occasionally since. War is a desperately serious adventure to-day. The old kings fought for glory; democracy fights to win.

Perhaps this is not so ignoble as it sounds. One does not gather figs from thistles. Glory is out of date and unpractical. Besides, King Demos, in reality, loves peace as much as royalty, and only becomes bloodthirsty when goaded by the political and journalistic agitators who lead him by the nose, like the big, foolish bear he is.

It is not, however, as a peacemaker that King Edward will be chiefly remembered by posterity. His efforts to preserve peace, of which he so well knew the value, were, after all, only successful as long as he was able to direct them personally. The effect of the removal of his guiding hand was very soon apparent. It is rather as a re-

markable personality that he will be remembered when all that he did, or tried to do, is forgotten. The great, outstanding feature of his personality, of which his love of peace and the tact for which he was noted were the natural products, was the open and manifest joy he took in life. He not only loved the joy of living for himself, but loved to bring it into the lives of others. This was the secret of his spell, as sympathy was that of Queen Alexandra's. That hers supplemented his was not the least of the gifts that Fortune lavished on him.

"King Edward," said President Roosevelt, "had the faculty of doing the right thing to a hair. When I was inaugurated President in 1904 he sent me, although at that time we had never met, together with one of the kindest and friendliest letters, a very beautiful miniature of John Hampden from Windsor Castle. Of the many gifts I received none touched me so much, save a ring containing the hair of Abraham Lincoln. Hampden is one of my heroes, along with Timoleon, Washington, and Lincoln. The King chose the gift which he could send with perfect dignity and I could accept with entire pleasure and appreciation. I had already been struck by the efficiency with which he did his work and the extraordinary appreciation he was receiving abroad, and this incident enabled me to understand why he had become such a power in international affairs and why all his people regarded him with ever-increasing devotion."

How well he understood the times in which he lived is illustrated by the importance he attached

to the Prime Minister. Strange as it seems, this office, which dated from the time of George I, who "allowed the appearance of a Prime Minister to represent him" at Cabinet meetings which he found irksome to attend owing to his inability to understand the English language, was not formally recognised in the official order of precedence. It often happened that at Court functions the Prime Minister, especially when a Commoner, lost in dignity. To obviate this the King, who was very scrupulous in these matters, issued a royal warrant by which the Premier took precedence over all his subjects, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Lord Chancellor alone excepted.

It goes without saying that such a King would understand and be understood by the people. Edward VII is the most remarkable example on record of the fusion of royalty with democracy. Long before he came to the throne his interest in all questions concerning the welfare of the people was notorious.

His death on the 6th of May, 1910, was unexpected. On being informed that he was ill Queen Alexandra, who was cruising in the Mediterranean, returned immediately. He died the following day. During the thirty-eight hours his body lay in state in Westminster Hall it is estimated that over one hundred and fifty people per minute passed the bier. It was one of the most striking tributes of democracy to royalty ever witnessed. His funeral was the last and grandest of his pageants. Day by day beforehand the outward and visible signs of the

nation's sorrow multiplied. Not a vestige of colour was to be seen anywhere in the vast crowd that lined the route of the funeral procession as it passed through London. The sight of this enormous mass of humanity in black impressed even those who composed it.

"They have given him to us now," said a white-faced working girl in a dusty black dress to a young working man who raised her for a moment above the heads of the crowd. It was, indeed, as if officialdom had given him to those black-garbed myriads to mourn!

Three days after her husband's death Queen Alexandra addressed the following Message to the Nation :

"From the depths of my poor broken heart I wish to express to the whole nation and our kind people we love so well my deep-felt thanks for all their touching sympathy in my overwhelming sorrow and unspeakable anguish.

"Not alone have I lost everything in him, my beloved husband, but the nation, too, has suffered an irreparable loss by their best friend, father, and Sovereign thus suddenly called away.

"May God give us all His Divine help to bear this heaviest of crosses which He has seen fit to lay upon us—'His will be done.' Give me a thought in your prayers which will comfort and sustain me in all I have still to go through. Let me take this opportunity of expressing my heart-felt thanks for all the touching letters and tokens of

sympathy I have received from all classes, high and low, rich and poor, which are so numerous that I fear it will be impossible for me ever to thank everybody individually.

"I confide my dear son into your care, who, I know, will follow in his dear father's footsteps, begging you to show him the same loyalty and devotion you showed his dear father.

"I know that both my dear son and daughter-in-law will do their utmost to merit and keep it.

"ALEXANDRA."

There is a power in these artless words which no eloquence can match. The note of personal intimacy in this message, characteristic of all Queen Alexandra's public utterances, made it seem as if it were addressed individually to every one of her subjects. The impression it produced was so deep that a facsimile in the Queen's handwriting, ornamented with a border symbolic of grief by Sir Edward Poynter, President of the Royal Academy, was published and the proceeds of the sale given to a charity.

V

Borne off on the crest of the wave from "a world all in opera around him," King Edward carried with him the zest of life which had given an *élan* even to commonplace things. The change was felt immediately. Outwardly, the life of the nation proceeded as usual, but its buoyancy had lost something indefinable and *insouciant*.

To Queen Alexandra it must have seemed as

if the continuity of all that life held for her was broken. She had seen the chief pillars of her happiness fall one by one—her “precious eldest son,” her “adored mother,” her “devoted father.” Now, with the passing of her “beloved husband,” the arch itself had given way.

Queen Louise had died on the 29th of September, 1898, aged eighty-four, with all her children around her, Queen Alexandra and the Empress Marie holding her hands when she breathed her last. She was in full possession of her mental faculties, and had not lost her interest in affairs. On the morning of the day she died she had the “home and foreign papers read to her.”

One of the remarkable women of her age—as her correspondence and other documentary evidence will prove when published in another generation or two—she was to the world a somewhat shadowy figure. And this, too, considering the importance of the rôle she played, will be cited as a proof of her ability. The German Press, recalling Schleswig-Holstein-Hesse-Cassel confiscations and those intimate family reunions under her roof, described her when she died as a *she-Machiavelli*. The memory of a woman who, without fortune, marries for love a man without prospects, holds him for a life-time, cheerfully brings up a large family who idolise her under adverse circumstances in the path of virtue, lives simply in prosperity, and “is feared by Bismarck,” is surely worth preserving.

Her father's death some seven years later—the 29th of January, 1906—was a shock to Queen Alexandra, the harder to bear because she was

denied the morbid consolation of being with him at the end. Though eighty-eight, his death was quite unexpected. On the morning of the day he died he had granted audiences and transacted business apparently in his usual health. After lunch he suddenly collapsed while conversing with his daughter the Empress Marie, and, to her horror, expired almost immediately. A superb old man, who "took saddle exercise regularly till eighty, after that used to drive the drag in which his family made excursions on their annual visits home."

A picturesque figure of a king, too, of a type that is not bred any more. He was the sole sovereign in Europe who, in a democratic age, managed to retain the royal privilege of free intercourse between the king and the people. He was accessible to the meanest, and anyone, if respectably clad, could attend his palace receptions. He was, however, a firm believer in personal rule. This was a point on which he and his subjects could never agree; but, as it was quite manifest that he was solely actuated by a sincere desire to benefit Denmark, it caused no rancour. At last, taught by experience, his people were even willing to admit, as far as he personally was concerned, that "political wisdom was on the side of the ruler." When he died they termed him "a people's king," which he was in the grand old true sense of the word.

With the death of Christian IX the famous annual reunions of his children ceased. They no longer had the same inducement to foregather. Nevertheless, partly from force of habit, partly

for old times' sake, Queen Alexandra and the Empress Marie still clung to the old tradition. Between them they bought "Hvidore," a "white" villa on the shores of the Baltic, near Bernstorff, as a sort of trysting-place. What memories they had to exchange, what regrets to share! *Sunt lachrymæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt*. At "Hvidore" the stage is mounted, as of old, for the romantic drama of The Affections of the Glucksburgs; but the actors and actresses are lacking for the cast. The dead answer not to the call, and even the living are silent. The brother-Kings of Denmark and Greece respond to a more imperative summons. And Thyra, Duchess of Cumberland, "queen who will never wear a crown," as the gipsy fortune-teller predicted on the beach at Klampenborg, God knows how many summers ago now! stirs not in her tragic, magnificent dream at Gmunden. Soon even the widowed sister-Queens themselves come no more.

While King Edward's death altered the official status, it did not lessen the national importance of the Queen. On the same date as her message to the nation the public were informed that she was henceforth to be officially styled the Queen-Mother. The idea appealed to popular sentiment. To the masses, who had always loved her, it suggested veneration, rather than venerability. "It is well," said the *Times*, "that we should pray for her by that dear English name."

The veneration in which she was held throughout the Empire was, indeed, quite remarkable. A Canadian officer, who came from a remote part of Canada, writing from the front to a friend in England, declared that it had been one of the dreams of his life to see Queen Alexandra, and that when in London on leave he used eagerly, but in vain, to scan the daily papers in the hope of discovering from the announcement of her movements an opportunity of getting a glimpse of her. The unaffected candour with which he expressed his devotion for the beautiful Queen he had never seen is peculiarly poignant.

“ . . . I am sorry,” he writes to his friend, “ that once more I have failed in the long-cherished desire that I might see Her Majesty Queen Alexandra before I passed on. In my country we adore her, and have never permitted *any* other member of the Royal Family to usurp her place in our love.

“ It is perhaps amusing to recall that as a small boy I believed the tiny portrait my mother treasured of Queen Alexandra as a bride to be the Madonna! I have it with me in the trenches. I treasure it greatly. It shall be one of my mascots.”

Though the Queen had received many and frequent tokens of individual affection, it had long been felt that the people as a whole should be given the means of showing it. The opportunity occurred on the fiftieth anniversary of her residence in England. A committee was accordingly formed with “ the object of expressing the people’s affection for Queen Alexandra by calling attention

to the needs of the hospitals, convalescent homes, and other kindred charitable institutions in which she is interested." This "tribute with a purpose" was the origin of Alexandra Day.

On the 26th of June, 1913, the date agreed on, women were to be seen in the streets of every town and village in England selling badges of wild roses (Queen Alexandra's favourite flower) for any sum one cared to pay. The Queen herself was induced to drive through the streets of London in an open carriage, and received a remarkable demonstration of loyalty, the memory of which, she said afterwards, "she should cherish to the last day of her life."

The success of the scheme was, indeed, so encouraging that Alexandra Day has since been celebrated annually throughout the Empire. It is estimated that over £700,000 have been raised in this way for the benefit of charity since the idea was originated.

One of the most striking public proofs of the universal regard she inspired occurred during the debate in Parliament on the Civil List after King Edward's death in July 1910. The Socialist leader, Keir Hardie, objected to the grant for the upkeep of the Royal Palaces as excessive. Recriminations followed, and some bitter things were said by him in the heat of the moment. When he discovered, however, that the item he particularly objected to related to the Palace of the Queen-Mother, he withdrew his protest.

"May I just add," he said, before resuming his seat, "that I should be sorry if any words of mine have given offence to the royal lady."

His obvious sincerity gave a grace to this gesture which the most ardent advocate of royalty might have envied.

There are some roses that fall only leaf by leaf and retain their fragrance to the end—last roses of a summer that has gone, roses to which sentiment ever fondly clings.

“It is not a courtier’s phrase, nor a flatterer’s compliment,” said a prominent London paper at the time of her Silver Wedding, “to tell the Princess of Wales to her kind and beautiful face that which she knows so well, that she is the delight of the entire Empire. If there be, indeed, one question upon which we could poll a unanimous vote in these islands and dependencies—one point as to which all are utterly and always of one and the same opinion—it is upon the matter of the virtues and graces of Her Royal Highness.”

So it has ever been. “The one point as to which all are utterly and always of one and the same opinion”—a most significant fact, well worth more than a fleeting reflection. A symbol of the old metaphorical *healing* virtue of royalty; the lost talisman, or Ariadne’s-thread, as it were, in the gloomy labyrinth of discord and disillusion from which the present generation, maddened by its self-deification, like the Cæsars, distractedly seeks egress.

GENEALOGICAL CHART OF THE OLDENBURG DYNASTY

THEODORIC, Count of Oldenburg, died 1440: married Hedwige, heiress of the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, which were united under the Counts of Holstein in 1386. She died 1459.

Christian I,
Elected King of Denmark 1448.
Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, 1459,
died 1481.

Hans

Christian II,
deposed 1523,
no issue.

Margaret,
married James IV,
King of Scotland.

Frederick I,
Elected Duke of Schleswig-Holstein 1481,
and succeeded his nephew Christian II
by election 1523, thus uniting again Den-
mark and Schleswig-Holstein.

Christian III.

Frederick II.

Christian IV.

Frederick III.

Christian V.

Frederick IV.

Christian VI.

Frederick V,
married 1st, Lousia, daughter
of George II of England.
married 2nd, Julia
of Brunswick.

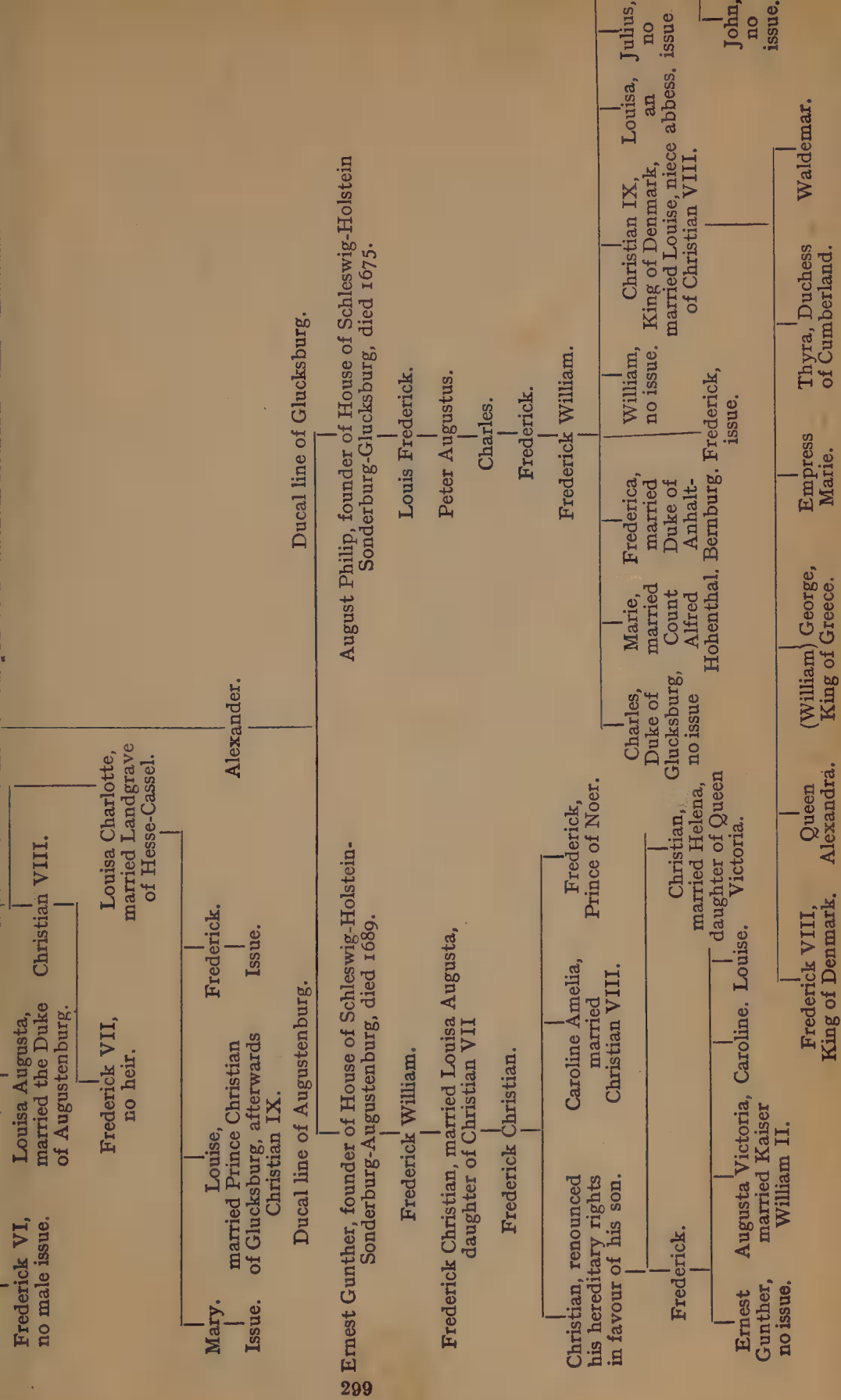
Hans,
Duke of Schleswig-Holstein
and of Sonderburg.

Adolphus,
Duke of Holstein-
Gottorp, died 1586.
His descendants in order
of primogeniture.

The Romanoff
Czars of Russia.

The Vasa Kings
of Sweden
(extinct).
The Grand Dukes
of Oldenburg.

The eventual rights of succession of the
Holstein-Gottorp line, and its elder
Russian branch in particular, which
would materialise only after the ex-
tinction of the Augustenburg and
Glucksburg lines, were by no means
abandoned. They were, on the con-
trary, expressly renewed in the Pro-
tocol of Warsaw, 1851, which pre-
ceded and formed the basis of the
London Protocol, 1864.



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